

# RUSSIA THROUGH THE CENTURIES

*The Historical Background of the U.S.S.R.*

*by*

M. PHILIPS PRICE

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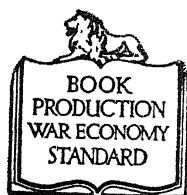
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TO MY DAUGHTER  
TANIA



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## Preface

THE comradeship in arms between the British Commonwealth of Nations and the U.S.S.R. has made it imperative that a closer understanding between the two peoples should be achieved. Many years of misunderstanding has made this difficult, but the will to *rapprochement* is now there, in part at least because of the recognition of the magnificent military achievements of Russia, which have disclosed a virile and creative people who "knows what it fights for and loves what it knows."

I am profoundly convinced that the outlook of the Russian and Anglo-Saxon world are not hostile but complementary to each other, and both are rooted in the past. For Soviet Russia is the latest and most logical phase to which all that went before in Russian history was evolving. Conservative opinion in this country is inclined to think that the Russian October Revolution completely broke with the past and destroyed all the good traditions and inheritances of Old Russia. Left Wing opinion on the other hand tends to think also that the break with the past was complete, but that everything in Old Russia was so bad that a clean sweep was made and that the new régime has inherited nothing from the old. I think both these extreme views wrong, for the truth lies somewhere in the middle. In the following pages I try to show why.

I try to do so by telling the story shortly of the Russian people. At the same time this is not a comprehensive history, but rather an historical sketch in which I try to trace those features in the growth of the Russian State which seem to have been carried down through the centuries and to have been moulded by successive generations into new and more effective forms. I hope then that this short survey of Russian

history will tell its own story, and show the Soviets as the latest phase which the political genius of the Russian people has created to meet the needs of the twentieth century.

Throughout these pages I have kept in mind that it is not my business to praise or criticise the form of government in Soviet Russia, any more than I consider it my duty to pass judgment on the institutions of my own country. My sole object is to explain differences and trace historical trends in the two countries and plead for an understanding which will be really lasting this time.

Nor have I given a full or detailed account of the last great Revolution which has given rise to the U.S.S.R. I have thought it best to pick out the principal events to illustrate my theme, which is the continuity of the growth of Russian society and tradition from the days of Vladimir of Kiev, through Peter the Great to Lenin.

The outline of this book was laid down in some lectures which I did in the autumn of 1941 for the Ministry of Information. But I had been thinking out a plan for a short Russian history some time before this. Some years of residence in Russia before and during the last war gave me an acquaintance of Russia in transition from the old to the new. In 1910 I was a member of a scientific expedition which visited parts of Asiatic Russia, and thus I was able to study at first hand the relations between the Russians of the Tsar's Empire and their fellow-citizens of Asia. From 1914-18 I was *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Russia, during which time I saw two and a half years of the Tsar's régime in the European provinces and the Caucasus and a year and a half of the Revolution in what was then called Petrograd and Moscow. During that time, and since, I made myself acquainted with the standard works on Russian history, particularly with Kliuchefsky's monumental work, the smaller but most valuable history of Platonoff, and last, but not least, the classical



work of my friend, Professor Sir Bernard Pares—*A History of Russia*. I also found Masaryk's *Spirit of Russia* useful in following the movements of Russian thought, particularly in the nineteenth century.

The last thing that I claim for this book is that it is a complete history of Russia. But I hope it will be accepted as an attempt to fill a gap in popular thinking about the great and gallant people in Eastern Europe with whom our fortunes are now indissolubly linked.

M. PHILIPS PRICE

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## CHAPTER I

### *The Eastern Slavs*

It is not possible to understand modern Russia unless one first knows something about her past history. But that history is so different from anything that Western European nations experienced that Russia has always been regarded as something of an enigma to the Western mind. The basic fact that must first be understood is that the Russian state came into existence as a result of long and relentless struggle and of infinite patience and suffering on the part of the Russian people. It came about in this way. To the east of the Carpathian mountains and of the River Vistula a vast plain little above sea level extends for two thousand miles to the mountains of Central Asia. In the Middle Ages the northern part of this plain consisted of dense forests and treacherous swamps, where lived scattered tribes of hunters and fishermen speaking a primitive Finnish dialect. Further south towards the Black Sea a vast expanse of prairie met the eye with extensive natural ranches and black earth of great fertility. But where nature was kind Man was not. For here the land was liable to be swept over by bands of roaming horsemen from the dry steppes of Central Asia in search of pasture for their flocks after a dry summer. These horsemen drove all other flocks before them and regarded settled colonies as objects for plunder. Can anyone imagine a more uninviting place for a people to settle in and colonise? Raw, inhospitable Nature in the northern forests; shiftless, truculent Man in the southern steppes must have made life a nightmare. Yet in the course of centuries the Russians overcame these two opponents, Nature and Man. In the process they developed the character of toughness, infinite patience, capacity for introspection and a wistful longing to know the why and wherefore of life which is typical of all inhabitants of great

expanses of plain. Of art, literature and science they had at first none, and all the great movements, religious, cultural and political, which affected Western and Central Europe, particularly the Reformation, passed by without any effect on them. Russia's contacts were with the East. Engaged in land colonisation and struggle with nomads on the threshold of Asia, the tide of events in the West passed her by unheeded. And yet the Russians were a people of European racial origin. They are the Eastern branch of the great Slavonic group of peoples, speaking the Slav branch of the Aryan languages.

Originating probably somewhere between the Carpathians and the source of the Vistula these people some five or six centuries after Christ spread fanwise across the plains of Eastern Europe. To the west, north and south they settled and became the Poles, Czechs and Slovaks. These Western Slavs found in Bohemia and Eastern Germany, where they settled, some remnant of an old religion or culture. Roman Christianity had already reached these parts and settled conditions prevailed in the main. They became Roman Catholics but they kept their Slav tongue and resisted absorption by the Germans. The Eastern branch of the Slavs on the other hand, the Ukrainian on the south and the Great Russian on the north, found nothing but primitive Finnish hunters or uncultured nomads who, like them, were pagans and nature-worshippers. Meeting no older civilisation on their eastern expansion and being engaged in a life and death struggle with Nature and Man, the Eastern Slavs were at first forced to some extent to live a nomad life, shifting their colonies from place to place and finding no time for the finer arts or the spiritual exercises of maturer civilisations. Thus the Eastern Slavs by the direction of their expansion became politically hampered in their development and spiritually cut off from their kinsmen who had migrated westwards into Europe. Contact with nomadic Asia made the Russians in the early part of their history cruder and less developed than the peoples further west in Europe.



Certain interesting characteristics have, however, come to the Russians as a result of these natural conditions. In order to colonise the steppe and clear the forest they showed from the earliest times preference for a kind of primitive communism which has come down through the centuries. The writer remembers when travelling in Siberia in the upper reaches of the Yenesei river finding Russian peasants, pioneers, fur traders and hunters, scattered along that great river and its tributaries and living a life in which their individual efforts at cultivating, trapping and trading were woven into a very definite community life. The peasants herded their flocks in common, cleared forest tracks together and divided the timber among themselves, put by some grain from the individual holdings into a communal granary against possible famine, went on fishing and trapping expeditions in parties and divided the proceeds. One could see there in fact something which had been going on from the earliest dawn of Russian history. Whether in the black earth steppes of the Ukraine or in the gloomy forests round the White Sea the Russian, hardened in the struggle with Nature, loves to live and work together in communities. In this respect he is in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon. The Canadian farmer of the western prairies or the trapper of the Rockies generally lives a lonely life for months on end and only sees his fellow-men when visiting a trading station.

On the other hand, as the Eastern Slavs spread across the forests and steppes from the eighth to eleventh centuries their original tribal communism, suitable for purely nomadic existence, became modified, as the communities tended to form settled agricultural colonies in the South or fishing and hunting colonies in the North. For now the early Russian household or "dvor" came into existence. The enlarged family circle, consisting of the man and his wife as the centre, with the married children and their children and relatives often formed the little community, worked together and shared in common. Thus even under the most rigorous fron-

tier pioneering the Eastern Slavs found pleasure in communal activity. Under these conditions the Cossacks developed their magnificent horsemanship and the northern peasant his amazing dexterity with the axe and all tools for shaping wood, showing thereby the Russian's innate capacity as a mechanic, which would show itself later when the machine age should dawn.

The early beginnings of a Russian state took shape during the course of the ninth century. At first it was a series of more or less independent communities mainly scattered along the rivers. After a time trade began to develop along these rivers between the Baltic and Black Sea. Meanwhile a nomadic tribe called the Pechenegs invaded the basin of the Dnieper river, thus blocking all movements and further colonisation. But about this time the Scandinavian people were becoming restive and were sending forth from their barren, rocky homeland bands of adventurers to seek their fortunes further south. Their invasions of England and Western Europe are well known to us, but they sailed also into the Mediterranean, encompassed Europe by sea and spread south-eastwards across the Russian plains. From the Baltic they penetrated down the rivers Niemen, Dvina and Volkov into the Dnieper watershed and so reached the Black Sea. These bands of Vikings or Varangers, as they were known, came in contact with the Russians who were also pushing along the rivers and starting trade relations with the Greeks. The constant interruption of movement along the rivers by the Pechenegs and other nomads from the East set up a sort of community of interest between the Eastern Slavs and the Varangers and soon Russian settlements were found along the river banks in which the Russians were the hunters, traders and cultivators, while the Varangers provided the armed forces to protect the community from raids. In time they became a ruling caste and their captains the local chiefs. The most important of the Viking chiefs was one Rurik, who was invited to become ruler of the Slav settlement of Nov-

gorod on Lake Ilmen in 862. Similar ruling families of Scandinavians were founded in Kiev and these were all ultimately absorbed into the society and life of the Russians whom they ruled.

The Slavs and Varangers at this time were pagan, but during the tenth century they at last came up against influences of a higher and older civilisation than theirs; none other than that of the Byzantine Empire with its Greek Orthodox Christianity. Here again is one of the influences which have caused Russia to differ from the Western World. For the first cultural influence that came to her, namely Christianity, was of the Eastern or Greek rite. The settlements which the Eastern Slavs had established on the shores of the Dnieper, and the Dniester and the Black Sea soon got into trading relations with the Greeks and so exchanged the products of the Northern forests and steppes for the spices, silks and ornaments of the Levant. And so the way led to Constantinople, that great metropolis of the East. And soon the uncultured, pagan Russians began to feel the influence of a great civilisation. The Eastern Roman Empire was by this time a great multi-racial political system. There were no Romans there now, and the Greeks were only one of many races and languages in that cosmopolitan Empire. For Southern Slavs inhabited some of the European lands of Byzantium, while Syrians, Chaldeans, Armenians and Circassians inhabited along with Greeks the Asiatic provinces. But over all the influence and tradition of Greece prevailed. It was with Greek philosophy and Asiatic mysticism in addition to Roman law and discipline that the Russians were now brought into contact by their traders. An absence of racial animosity characterised the Byzantine political system. This tradition was acquired too by the Russians with whom racial prejudice in their dealings with non-Russians has always been completely absent. In the Greek Orthodox Christianity and culture of Byzantium racial toleration was also accompanied by an aesthetic and emotional appeal to

the senses. A solemn dignity characterised the religious ceremonies at St. Sophia and in the countless churches from the Caucasus to the Aegean Sea. When in A.D. 989 the Russian Prince Vladimir of Kiev, ashamed at the backwardness of his people, turned over in his mind whether he should make them acknowledge the Jewish faith, Islam, Roman or Greek Christianity, it was on the latter that his choice finally fell. He knew he would never get his subjects to eschew pork or alcohol and so Judaism and Islam had to go. He would tolerate no Italian priest in Rome interfering with his young state. But the emissaries whom he had sent to Constantinople to see the grand religious ceremonies in St. Sophia returned to Kiev to tell their lord that what they had seen was so beautiful that they knew not whether they were in heaven or on earth. So the easy-going and ornamental Christianity of Greek tradition captivated the souls of the rough, uncouth but naïve and impressionable Russians and brought them in contact with their first great civilising influence. They could not of course understand the deep subtleties of the Greek mind or the philosophical theories of the learned or the full meaning of the dogmas of the Orthodox Church. Yet being fresh and untutored certain things appealed to them. Amongst them was the pageant of the Incarnation and of the Salvation of Man which was enacted in mysterious beauty each Sunday at an Orthodox church service. The sense of an all-embracing Christian community of all races and languages appealed to them and they even coined the word "Sobornost," to denote complete oneness with the Divine essence and the merging of the individual soul in the mystic community of the church. All this appealed to the Russians and their Christianity became based on the senses rather than on the reason. And so this native Russian humanism, when wedded to the organised worship of the Greek Orthodox Church, had a profound effect on the course of Russian history.

But the Russians did not slavishly follow the Greek

tradition. On the contrary as a modern historian of the Russian church has shown<sup>1</sup> they put their own and very original interpretations into their new religion. The hard struggle of their lives against the forces of Nature in the forests and the human enemies in the great steppes made them take comfort in their sufferings from their religion. For them there was no life of ease and leisure on the sunny banks of the Bosphorus which enabled the Greeks to spend their time in philosophical speculation. For them life was a hard struggle and they saw in their religion a simple interpretation of suffering. The very name they gave to the word "baptised" (*kreshchenie* in Russian) means a person who carries the cross, who understands its meaning and is ready to suffer for his belief. Their first saints were Boris and Gleb, two sons of Prince Vladimir of Kiev, who were murdered by their brother in order that the latter should succeed his father. The two murdered brothers did not defend themselves and preferred death to the shedding of a brother's blood. This ultra-pacifist attitude made a most profound impression on the Russians. Against the wishes of the Greek bishops, who did not understand this doctrine of non-resistance, Boris and Gleb were canonised by the Russian Church as saints. Thus even in those early days uncompromising self-sacrifice fired the imagination of the Russians. They put in fact their own interpretation on the Christianity they had learnt from the Greeks and through it all is seen the idea derived from their hard lives, that suffering is the essence of life. Quite early in Russian history the tendency is seen to seek no compromise when trying to solve the problems of life. This is further seen in another of the early saints of the Russian Church, who was canonised against the opposition of the Greeks. This was Theodosius, who though coming of well-to-do parents, lived an ascetic life among the poorest peasants of the land, renouncing all wealth and comfort. The Russians saw salvation in suffering and hope in the search after the complete truth, untrammelled by any compromise.

<sup>1</sup> *Moscow, The Third Rome*, by Dr. Nicolas Zernov, S.P.C.K. edition.

## *The First Russian States and Their Early Struggles<sup>1</sup>*

DURING the tenth and eleventh centuries the political and cultural centre of the Eastern Slavs was Kiev, that trading centre on the Dnieper which was connected by water with all those outposts of Russian colonisation, pushing north and east across the great plain. From here, too, contact was made via the Black Sea with Constantinople, and along the Dnieper came the Greek monks to give the Russians their alphabet and their grammar, and the Greek masons and architects to build and decorate in Byzantine style the first Russian churches and monasteries. This was the Kievan period of Russian history, and from this city the Princes, chosen of the people by rota from a ruling aristocratic class called boyars, became the centre of the political and cultural life of the Eastern Slavs.

At the same time a number of subordinate principalities accepted the suzerainty of the princes of Kiev, and their governors or "posadniki" were appointed by the prince. The local popular council or "vieche," however, often overruled the "posadniki." Quarrels developed among the smaller principalities and between them and Kiev. The framework of the state, which was supposed to unite the Russian community, was really very feeble and unable to protect it from the dangers which were even now threatening from without. From the eleventh to thirteenth centuries these dangers came from every side and the tender shoot of Russian nationality was all but withered by devastating blasts from east and west. For centuries past the Russian plain had been subjected to raids by the nomads from the East. Now the most

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter consult Map 1 (*at end*).

serious invasion of all took place by the Mongols or Tartars from Central Asia. To this we will return later. But first let us see what dangers threaten from the West. From this quarter Roman Catholic communities were beginning to press eastwards. Most dangerous of these were the Knights of the Teutonic Order and the Knights of the Sword. In that age of crusades, adventurers from Germany banded themselves together in religious orders and set out to convert to Christianity by fire and sword the heathen Letts, Lithuanians and Prussians of the Eastern Baltic. Commercial prospects also played a role in the crusade and the Knights were followed, at least along the coasts of the territories they occupied, by the Hanseatic League. What is now Latvia was subdued to these German Knights of the Sword who reduced the Lettish peasants to serfs and became themselves the feudal lords, enserfing a native population. Soon the Knights pushed on eastwards into the territories of the Eastern Slavs. Here they came upon the land ruled by the City Republic of Novgorod. Situated on the shores of Lake Ilmen, one hundred miles south of what is now Leningrad, this walled city with its sturdy inhabitants of Slav pioneers from the South had in recent times become a powerful force in the colonisation of the North. At first suzerain to the Prince of Kiev Novgorod was now in fact becoming largely independent. A council of traders and ruling families acted as a sort of executive government, but their acts were subject to approval by the "vieche" or general assembly of the citizens who were summoned to attend in the market place by the ringing of a great bell. Thus there grew up a form of primitive democracy, crude and often unruly, which established itself as a minor imperial power over the fishing, trading and peasant colonies of the north of Russia. The word of "Lord Novgorod the Great" became in time the law over these northern forests and swamps.

But Novgorod as well as Kiev was now in mortal danger. In 1236 the Swedes, opening up new trade routes and not

so much concerned with religious crusades, came down from the Baltic and sought to penetrate the territories of Novgorod. They were driven back, but soon after this the sinister and fanatical Teutonic Knights, the forerunners of modern German militarism, with the idea of forcibly converting the heretic Russians to the faith of Rome and using religion to establish Teutonic racial supremacy over the "barbarian" Slavs, advanced from the West, seized Pskov, one of Novgorod's western dependencies and marched on the city itself. The first historic clash between Germans and Russians had begun. In the hour of trial the Novgorodians summoned to their aid the son of one of their ruling families, Alexander Nefsky, perhaps the first great Russian soldier and statesman in history. The Tartars had already laid all South-Russia waste and were threatening Novgorod from the east. Proud and beautiful Kiev was in ruins, the Prince had fled and the young Russian state was in dissolution. Only "Lord Novgorod the Great" remained firm, and that city was now threatened on both sides. Alexander Nefsky's statesmanship consisted in temporising with the Tartars and pacifying them while he faced west to resist the Germans first. He doubted the ability of the Tartars to campaign in the forests and swamps of North Russia, since they were natives of the dry open steppes. But the German Knights had experience of the northern countries, hence they were for the moment the greater danger, and presents and baksheesh to the Tartar Khan must therefore be the order of the day. Then arming the citizens of Novgorod and the neighbouring peasants he set out to meet the German Knights advancing over the ice in the dead of winter on Lake Peipus. In spite of the superior weight and armour of the Germans, the native skill of the Russians, always better even in those early days in defence than in attack, coupled with their fanatical zeal in fighting for their hearths and homes and with a knowledge of every nook and corner of their land, succeeded in smashing up the German formations on the ice, while the latter's heavy



armour caused many to perish in the frozen waters. Russia's first struggle with German invaders ended after heavy sacrifices in the complete discomfiture of the enemy. "Lord Novgorod" thus in 1242 saved for the moment at least a remnant of the struggling Russian state.

But the foe from the East was now the more terrible and their number like the sands on the seashore. For the Tartar hordes had learnt a new military tactic and had revolutionised the warfare of that time. The Russians had been able to withstand the heavy armour of the German Knights, but they were powerless now before the swarms of mobile cavalry, armed with terrible swords and pikes, and unburdened by heavy baggage trains, for they lived on the plunder of the country. As Theodore Roosevelt wrote:<sup>1</sup> "The scourge of the Mongol conquests was terrible beyond belief, so that when even the land was flooded but for a moment, the memory long remained. It is not long since in certain churches in Eastern Europe the litany still contains the prayer; 'From the fury of the Mongols, Good Lord, deliver us.'" A good picture of what life in Russia must have been like during the height of the Mongol raids of the thirteenth century is obtained in the opera *Prince Igor*. The first scene is laid inside the walls of one of the early Russian towns. The elected Prince is seen among his people on a market day. Suddenly there is an eclipse of the sun and all fear some calamity. At that moment Tartar horsemen appear on the horizon, the peasants flee to the woods, the women to their homes and the men jump on their horses and ride out to meet the enemy. In the next scene the Russians are seen captives in the Tartar camp far away on the borders of Asia. Later scenes depict the return of the exiles and the rebuilding of their ruined homes.

The invasions of the Mongols or Tartars, as that section of them are called who became Mahommedan, was an appalling disaster for Russia. It completely cut the lines of com-

<sup>1</sup> Foreword to Jeremiah Curtin's *The Mongols*.

munications along the waterways by which the Russian communities traded with one another and with the outer world. The southern section based on Kiev was cut off from the northern centred on Novgorod, for the path of the invaders lay between them. Organised life became almost impossible. The towns were in ruins and skeletons lay everywhere. The remnants of the population hid in the northern forests till the monsters had passed on to other scenes of desolation. But on the death of the great Mongol war-lord, Genghiz Khan, one of his generals, Batu Khan, became ruler of Russia west of the Urals. Gradually lust of slaughter gave way to desire for tribute, and the last state of the Russians became worse than their first. For though they could return to rebuild their ruined homes and till their soil again, crushing taxation was now laid upon them, so that their working days were concerned solely with the object of securing a bare existence. In this tragic hour of Russia's history it was the northern territories that saved the situation. The mobile cavalry of the Mongols could not operate in the forests and swamps of the North. They could scour the steppes and hence Kiev and South Russia with its open plains where one could ride all day without an obstacle was ruined, but the newer territories of the young state in the North, through their relative inaccessibility to the Mongol armies, succeeded in holding out. North Russia and its inhabitants, who were called later the Great Russians, became at this early stage of Russian history what it became again in later centuries, the main bulwark of resistance to foreign invaders. Geography and climate in fact played a big role in determining the course of events.

Many features of Russian character are traceable to the terrible years of the Mongol domination. If pioneer life on the great plains produced toughness, the Mongol invasion produced immense patience and capacity to suffer as a great Russian character. Readiness to burn and destroy their own property rather than let it fall into the hands of the enemy became another feature. The "scorched earth" policy dates

back to the Tartar invasion. And indeed how could anyone value his personal possessions when they were liable to be destroyed at any moment. Hence the Russian characteristic of valuing the spiritual rather than the material things of this earth. The motto of the Russian has been, throughout his history; "Fear not those that kill the body, but fear those that kill the soul." When cruel tyrants come to invade, whether Tartars from the East or Germans from the West, the Russian sees nothing tragic in burning his possessions. It has happened so constantly before. Hence there are few very old and beautiful buildings in Russia to-day. The conditions for their creation were never present. The Russians till the fifteenth century lived like the British lived during the great raids of the Norsemen that followed the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain. They have had no nine hundred years of reasonably ordered government like most Western European states have had, at least those on the western seaboard of the continent. Instead they were the great cushion which saved Western Europe from the invasion of the Mongols, who might have reached further West, had it not been for the Russians. The Russian state therefore was bound to be a later development than the states of Western Europe. And this is another important feature in Russian history. From having been in the days of Vladimir of Kiev the north-eastern outpost of Christendom, she became after the thirteenth century for a considerable period completely cut off from Christian Europe. She became the western outpost of the Asiatic Mongol Empire. And this cut her off for at least two centuries from the influence of the West.

## *The Rise of Moscow and the Coming of Autocracy*

THE process of consolidating the Eastern Slavs into a nation under the auspices of the Princes of Kiev was rudely arrested by the Tartar invasion. By the twelfth century two other centres of political concentration besides Kiev were beginning to appear; Novgorod in the north-west and Vladimir-Suzdal in the Upper Volga region.<sup>1</sup> Kiev at first claimed suzerainty over the other two, but the bonds were weakening even before the invasion of the Tartars. Those Russian frontiersmen and pioneers who had penetrated into the northern forest had little in common with those of the southern steppes. Indeed, the three political centres began to vary in their form of government. In Kiev the aristocracy or boyars tended to be the dominant factor in the Government; in Novgorod the "Vieche" or popular assembly in the market-place, while in Vladimir-Suzdal the princes became the chief element. The so-called "appanage" system developed under the latter, whereby the Prince had complete control over the land of his territory and could even devise it to his successor at his death. The germ of autocratic government was here taking shape.

With the destruction of Kiev by the Tartars the other two centres were left to carry on the torch of Russia's young nationhood. Quite apart from the fact that Kiev, situated in the open country of the Ukraine, was more open to invasion from the East than Novgorod and Vladimir-Suzdal in the forests and swamps in the North, the internal dissensions among the boyars in Kiev would probably have led to a breakdown sooner or later. At the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> See Map 1 (*at end*).

fourteenth century there was no power as yet which could stand up to the Tartars. But as far as pressure from the West was concerned, Novgorod was now the chief political centre which could resist anything from that quarter. After the German Knights had been ignominiously thrown out of Russia another power threatened at that time, in the shape of Lithuania and Poland. The Lithuanians, who were still heathens, had been dispossessed by the German Knights of some of their territories on the Baltic seaboard and began to penetrate into Russian territory. In 1316 the Prince of Lithuania ruled from Vilna a territory stretching from Polotsk and the Dvina across the Upper Dnieper territories as far as Kiev. The people of the Western Ukraine who had once been the citizens of the Kiev Principality, the birthplace of Russian nationality, were now content to be ruled by the pagan Princes of Lithuania. To such an extent had morale suffered by the Tartar invasions that in the Ukraine Russian national consciousness was practically blotted out. To make matters worse in 1386 a union between the ruling houses of Lithuania and Poland brought about a joint Principality reaching over a large territory of Poland, Lithuania and the Western Ukraine. The Lithuanians had meanwhile become Roman Catholics and many Russian boyars left the Orthodox faith and succumbed to Western influences. Thus Poland during the fourteenth century began to influence the western part of Russia and that influence was in the main not a good one. Under the Kiev principality, while political power was exercised by the Prince and the boyars or ruling aristocracy, the trading class and the peasantry were in the main economically free. There were, of course, slaves, but in no large numbers, and the church greatly mitigated their lot. Some peasants became bondsmen if they had debts to pay off to landlords. But they were not legally bound to the soil once their debt was paid off. Serfdom found no place in early Russian history, for the tradition of the Byzantine Empire was largely followed and serfdom had not developed to any

extent there. But with the coming of Polish influence into the Western Ukraine in the fourteenth century the system of serfdom, hitherto alien to the Russians, was introduced from the West. The Polish nobility ("Szlachta") claimed personal ownership over the bodies of their peasants, and by their political power began to virtually enserf the western territories of the Eastern Slavs. A most vicious system thus came to the Russian territories of Podolia, Volhynia, Galicia, Chernigov and Kiev, whereby an alien nationality was established as an exploiter over a subject peasantry and class bitterness was aggravated by national animosities.

Fortunately there now began to appear on the horizon of Russian history something round which the young Russian state could rally. At the head of the waterways and roadways connecting the trading communities of Novgorod with the steppes of Southern Russia lay the little township of Moscow. The local princes were astute men who made good use of the geographical advantages of this town. First they gradually extended their territory at the expense of "Lord Novgorod the Great." Then, while that great Republic was engaged in local squabbles, the Moscow Prince succeeded in persuading the Tartar Khan that he was the man that mattered most among the Russians. In 1328 the Tartar overlord, Uzbek Khan, recognised Ivan I as Grand Prince of Moscow with power to collect the annual tribute to be paid to the Golden Horde from all Russian lands. So exhausted were the people of Russia with the internal feuds among boyars and princes, so fearful of German Knights and Polish lords bringing serfdom from the West and of Tartars demanding tribute from the East, that in desperation they accepted the overlordship of the Grand Prince of Moscow in the hope that he would keep internal peace and barter with the Tartars for moderation in the tribute. So the power and territory of Moscow began to swell. The Mongol deputies, or "baskaks," now ceased to interfere in matters of tribute in the internal affairs of the Russians. The Grand Prince of Moscow became the chief

agent of the Mongol lord. He even at times oppressed his people to pay the Mongols. He acquired supreme autocratic power over them, but he meant ultimately to free them from the foreigner. Thus Simon, the son of Ivan I, in 1340, appealing to his own people and to the Russians of the neighbouring principalities and cities, said: "Russia is only strong and glorious if the Princes obey the greatest among them, and only by obedience to him can they be freed from the Tartar yoke."

When Uzbek Khan died quarrels broke out among the Tartars. The Grand Prince of Moscow profited by these dissensions and became more and more independent. Thus the tables were turned on the Tartars. The mantle of autocratic rule was transferred from the shoulders of the Golden Horde to that of the Grand Prince of Moscow, and the tradition of strong authoritarian government to unite the Eastern Slavs and deliver them from their tormentors from west and east was founded on the personality of that Prince. The foundation of the new Russian state was now being well and truly laid, but it was a foundation of strong authoritarian rule centred in a single ruler. This tradition was further assisted by the example of the Byzantine Empire to which the Russians owed so much. For here the Emperor was the sole representative of God on Earth, father of his people and absolute arbiter of life and death.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century Moscow felt strong enough to challenge the Golden Horde. Dmitry Donskoy, then Grand Prince, was the first to stand up to the Tartars in open fight and defeated them at Kulikovo in 1380. But the Tartars avenged their defeat two years later by sacking Moscow. The Grand Prince was not strong enough yet for the final trial of strength, for he was alone. Novgorod, Suzdal and Ryazan remained neutral, while the Lithuanians combined with the Tartars against him. Moscow's neighbours would have to join with him, if Russia was to be freed. In the fifteenth century this gradually came about. Ivan III, who became Grand Prince of Moscow in 1462, accomplished the

task. It was essential that Novgorod, the greatest of the neighbouring Russian states, should come in. But Novgorod was divided. In the "Vieche" the poorer classes and the peasants sympathised with Moscow and wanted to assist her Grand Prince to free them from foreign tribute and leave them to enjoy the fruits of their labour. But the "zhitie," or rich merchants of Novgorod, were opposed to this. They joined with the Catholic Lithuanians and Poles against Moscow and were ready to sell their own Russian people to foreigners to retain their privileges. They also wanted to appease the commercial interests connected with the Hanseatic League. But in 1428 Muscovite troops overran Novgorod, the rule of the merchants was over and the lot of the common people of Novgorod was improved. Moscow still further liberated Russia by attacking Lithuania, who was intriguing with the Tartars against her. Lithuania was forced to give up the Orthodox provinces of the west which had gone over to Rome. Thus to the east and west Moscow consolidated the new Russian state and later began to take her place in the affairs of Europe.

In 1453 Constantinople was captured by the Ottoman Turks and the Greek scholars, writers, artists and Church leaders fled to the north and west. This had a profound effect on Russia. The Russian Church saw its opportunity to proclaim that Christian orthodoxy was now centred in Russia, that Moscow had indeed become the Third Rome, and the Byzantine two-headed Eagle the symbol of Holy Russia; that the Greeks through allowing the Crusaders and Roman Catholic Latins to set up their authority in Constantinople had defiled the true Christian faith, the torch of which was now alone held aloft by Russia. In the political field, too, the Grand Duke of Moscow saw himself as the head of the state which was to be the bulwark against the western expansion of Islam, and this added a further incentive to the concentration of power in his hands and to the consolidation of the new Russian state which had now arisen from the anarchy of the Tartar invasions.



## *The Foundation of the Eastern Slav Empire*

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the new Russian state under the leadership of Moscow was established and ready to claim its right to become a power in Eastern Europe. It had, however, to decide its foreign policy, establish firm relations with its neighbours and consider the advisability or otherwise of further expansion. If it decided on the latter, it could look two ways—east or west. If it went east it would in the main be a territorial expansion at the expense of the Tartars. It would mean that Russia would become a multi-racial Empire on the threshold of Europe and Asia, uniting politically many races and creeds, containing Christian Russians and Ukrainians, Mahommedan Tartars and Circassians, Nature-worshipping Finns and Buddhist Kalmucks. These would all be united in one great family under the Tsar, Father of his people and heir to the tradition of the Greek Empire of Byzantium. Such a Russia would in the conditions of those days be half-Asiatic in outlook and materially backward.

If on the other hand the new Russian state eschewed eastern expansion and looked to the West, territorial expansion would be difficult and its possibilities strictly limited. Western neighbours, like Poland and Sweden, were well armed and had better material resources to draw from. A Western trend in foreign policy would mean limited territorial expansion but considerable infiltration of Western ideas, methods of administration, commerce and material improvements. It was not surprising that the young self-conscious State should fear the West at first and eschew its material advantages and aim rather at forming a Eur-Asian Empire of many races.

The process was all the more inviting as a result of the decline of the Tartar power. The Golden Horde never recovered quite from the defeat it suffered at the hands of Timur or Tamerlane the Great in 1395 on the Terek. For dissension among the descendants of the Mongol conqueror, Genghiz Khan, had become increasingly rife. The Mongols and their Mahommedan descendants, the Tartars, had little to contribute in the sphere of government and nothing in the arts and sciences. At first their only idea was murder and plunder and later they were concerned with tribute from the enslaved. With nothing else in their minds it was small wonder that their leaders fell out over the division of the spoils. Thus the greatest blow at the power of the Golden Horde was struck at the end of the fourteenth century by Timur, himself a Tartar ruler from Central Asia, who had set up his capital at Samarkand, and had built up for a short time great military power. When he defeated Tokhtamish on the Terek, he struck a blow which unwittingly on his part resulted in the weakening of the force which was holding Russia in subjection. Although the Golden Horde still continued to function for a time, its days were numbered. In less than a century its power over Russia was no more, and in 1533 there came to the throne in Moscow a young Tsar who was destined to turn the tables on Russia's former oppressors.

Ivan IV, known as the Terrible, had been taught by the Church dignitary, the Metropolitan Macarius, to regard Moscow as the Third Rome and himself as the political head of Orthodox Christianity in Europe and the East. When he grew up his mind became set on destroying the last semblance of Tartar power in Europe. He therefore turned in 1552 to the last Tartar fortress, Kazan, at the junction of the Volga and its tributary, the Kama. After a bitter struggle the fortress fell and the Tartar rule over Russia was at an end. The considerable Tartar population of the Middle Volga, together with Finnish tribes, the Cheremiss, Chuvash and Mordvins, now became incorporated into what was gradually becoming

an eastern Slav Empire. Four years later Ivan turned south to the mouth of the Volga and the shores of the Caspian Sea. Here he took the town of Astrakhan and overthrew the feeble authority of the Nogai Tartars, who had established themselves at Serai, where once the Golden Horde had ruled in splendour.

These successful actions of Ivan resulted in the pacification of these frontiers and the opening up of the eastern territories from the Volga to the Urals to Russian colonisation. And a considerable drift in this direction began at this time, for the pressure of enforced military service on the peasants of Central Russia to serve in Ivan's wars resulted in a large number of the more independent spirits seeking escape in the great expanses bordering on Asia, which were now being opened up for the first time. This caused serious depopulation of villages in the territories round Moscow, but in spite of this the greater need was recognised of strengthening the frontiers with military colonists who would occupy and till the soil, but also hold the frontier against possible incursions by nomads of Central Asia. In this way the Cossack communities came to be formed after 1571 when the Tsar after a special enquiry took over the territory south of the Oka river and encouraged the settlement of military colonists on the territory of the Don basin and the lower Volga.<sup>1</sup> These Cossacks were recruited often from unruly spirits who refused the restricted life of Central Russia, but were ready to defend the frontier if they received tax-free land and the right to elect their own chief or "ataman." Again the village council of the Cossack colonies, similar to the "mir" of the peasants in the homeland further west, indicated the essentially popular basis of Russian social life even in remote frontier districts. It was these and similar councils based on occupation that became the forerunner of Soviets in later days.

Thus lines of villages were established from the lower Volga to the Don where the Cossacks worked on the land

<sup>1</sup> See Map 2 (*at end*).

but kept a sharp look-out for marauders who still tried to raid the Central provinces of Russia. The Tartars were now broken as a political force, but as subjects of the Tsar large numbers of them remained in the new Volga provinces sharing exactly the same rights and privileges as Russian Christian subjects. Indeed, they were actually more privileged, because they were exempted from military service. Liberality on racial matters was from an early stage an outstanding feature of the Russian state.

Meanwhile, further to the north more adventurous Cossacks went further afield and, becoming nomads themselves, advanced the frontiers into Asia itself. In 1582 the Cossack Yermak crossed the Urals with a band of adventurers and in the space of a few years traversed the gigantic territories of Siberia and claimed it for the Tsar. In this part of Asia, however, practically no resistance was offered to the Cossacks. Indeed, the native Finnish tribes welcomed the Cossacks and traded with them. A process of natural penetration took place by later waves of Cossack colonisers who came to Siberia as traders and pioneers, mingled with the natives and even after a few years began to intermarry with them. Occasions when there were armed clashes between the Cossacks and the Siberian natives were very rare. How different was this peaceful penetration of the Russians to the barbarism of the Tartar invasions of Russia and to the German penetrations of Western Russia of later centuries!

While this multi-racial Empire was forming in the East during the sixteenth century, internal changes were taking place in the Muscovite state at home. Ivan the Terrible found that his work was being hindered by the boyars or aristocratic families round the Court. They were jealous of the Tsar's rising authority, and resented his failure to consider their interests and privileges before other elements of the community. By methods which have been repeated from time to time in Russian history since those days, Ivan had those hindrances removed. The boyars in fact were "liqui-

dated." Ivan set up a "court party" of his own which organised the so-called "oprichniki" or secret police which spied on and provoked the boyars to say and do things which could be construed as "unfriendly" to the Tsar. Exile, torture, execution and seizure of property then followed. Victims were impaled on poisoned sticks where they died gradually after twenty-four hours. On impalement they often began to curse themselves for their real or imaginary crimes and to bless the Tsar who tortured them. This aspect of Russian history has repeated itself, too, in later times. The upshot of all this was that the Tsar concentrated more and more power into his own hands, but he created a legacy of bitterness among those boyars who survived and a body of hangers-on who might develop shortly into a greater danger than the one he had eliminated. Ivan has gone down to history with the reputation of an ogre of cruelty, and cruel he was indeed, his actions verging even on sadism. Unbalanced, too, he was by nature, for he would have periods of remorse. He was in many ways a typical Russian. He wanted to do a great thing, create an Eastern state of many races and make Moscow the Third Rome. He had a great ideal but he was not particular about his methods. On the other hand, like all Russians, he had a conscience and he would repent from time to time. He even once renounced the throne, went off and buried himself in a monastery. But the people of Moscow, though frightened of his orgies and bouts of cruelty, instinctively knew that he was defending them against corrupt and oppressive officials and the pretensions of a privileged boyar class. In response to their supplications he came back. He continued for a time to work for the creation of a new ruling class which would not be a closed caste but would draw in fresh blood and capable recruits from below. But his success was only partial and his appalling excesses continued, culminating in the murder of his son and his own death in a state which was finally little to be distinguished from madness.

Ivan the Terrible's reign saw the foundation of a strong Russian state in Eastern Europe and his foreign policy, though unsuccessful in the main in the West, was successful in the East. In internal affairs popular councils were extending, representing the interests of merchants of the towns, peasant communes and Cossack "stanitsas." But the Government at the top became increasingly despotic and the will of the Tsar was now the supreme law. Nevertheless, Ivan the Terrible in spite of his cruelties did in the main use his powers to defend the common people of Russia against privileged ruling families who had established themselves in positions of authority over the previous century. But the peasantry were in danger of sinking into serfdom, and this in itself was fraught with danger to the stability of the state, which subsequent events were all too soon to prove.

*The Time of Troubles*

WE have seen how after long struggle and suffering the Eastern Slavs founded the Great Russian state and drove out invaders from the East and the West. In the process the strong authoritarian rule of the Tsar was found the most effective form of government to unify the country and defend its frontiers. Nevertheless, all through this time the common people, and especially the peasants and frontier pioneers, retained their primitive communal councils which debated and decided upon the problems of each little community. This period of Russian history ended with the death of Ivan the Terrible. Under him Russia conceived herself as the great Eur-Asian Empire of the East, heir to the tradition of Imperial Rome, uniting Eastern and Western people, regardless of race and religion. Russia had a holy mission also as head of the Orthodox Christian Church and as such an example and pattern to two continents. Such was the dream when, at the end of the sixteenth century, the Muscovite Empire reached its first brief zenith. But had Russia the material and social basis for this dream? Could she lead Europe and Asia and yet remain aloof from Western Europe, despising its influence and refusing to learn anything from the material advancement of the latter which had come to it through the Reformation?

For now indeed grave internal weaknesses began to show themselves in the Russian state. The social basis was growing unsound. The Tsar, being in need of large military forces, had permitted a landowning class to develop in Central Russia, who acquired the right to conscript the peasants for the Tsar's service. This was a break with the old Byzantine tradition that all classes in the state had the obligation to serve the Emperor, who was in turn their sole protector. But now increased burdens were placed upon the peasants for military

service and for taxes and their liberty of movement restricted, while the new landowning class was being relieved of the duty to serve on condition that it provided the recruits for the army and collected the taxes from the village communes. Thus a grave source of danger to the young state began to appear. As the territorial expansion of the Empire increased, so the liberty of large sections of the population decreased. The sturdy independence of the early Russian peasant, battling against natural obstacles, began to be overshadowed by the grim spectre of serfdom—a new and to some extent foreign institution. Indeed, as far as the Ukraine and South-West Russia was concerned, it was foreign influence which largely introduced serfdom here. The Polish landlords during the period of Polish-Lithuanian ascendancy in these parts had riveted serfdom on the necks of the peasants of the Western Ukraine.

But in Great Russia itself important social changes were going on. The old boyar ruling families who had acted as advisers and ministers to the Tsars and whose status was entirely based on social position and genealogical trees were, as we have seen, severely hit by Ivan the Terrible. The latter had encouraged a rival from below in the form of a small landowning class or “*dворяне*,” who were now increasingly used for recruiting and taxing in the villages in place of the older aristocracy and their agents. Thus we had, early in the seventeenth century, in Russia a half-broken and resentful boyar class, a small landlord class with increasing power and privilege, an autocratic Tsar and a peasantry with its primitive communal councils whose liberties were in danger. And all around, particularly in the West, were envious neighbours, ready to seize the first opportunity to invade and plunder the young Russian state with its pretensions to lead Europe and Asia. The outlook was dark indeed.

In addition to the social disequilibrium now growing in the state there was an increasing hindrance to any effort to set it right. A popular assembly, if one could function satis-



factorily, would have been a support to a Tsar determined to see justice done in the more complex society that was now developing. Thus, the "Zemsky Sobor," or Council of the Land, which had met from time to time and represented the population, at least of the towns, on a professional and functional basis, together with the Church, might have been such a body. But it failed to rise to the need of this critical time. The disunity between the components of the state were too great. Boyars hated the new "dvorianie," the peasant feared both and the mercantile class of the towns was too weak. Then, too, there was a tendency among the peasants, threatened with serfdom, to avoid struggle for their rights. Instead of revolutionary agitation they left their hearths and homes and sought new lands and freedom in the east, where Ivan the Terrible's victorious campaigns had already paved the way for colonisation of open spaces. Instead of revolt they went on strike and emigrated, like the children of Israel in Egypt and reforming sects in later Jewish history.

But it was not only the new opportunities for eastern colonisation which helped to weaken the state in the centre. There was also a certain hangover from the so-called appanage times that caused the average citizen of "Rus" to regard his country as the private estate of the Tsar and himself as a servant living there on suffrage but, if conditions grew too bad, able to change his situation. The Byzantine tradition, inherited by both the Kiev Principality and by the Muscovite Grand Duchy had its good side, as we have seen, in its policy of racial and religious toleration. But on the reverse side this same tradition caused the state to be regarded as the private property of the Emperor. From this it followed that the citizen had rights that could only be redressed by petition to the Tsar through the councils of the various classes, and if this failed there was nothing left but to emigrate. And after Ivan the Terrible's death this avenue of petition failed, because the old dynasty of Ivan Kalita had died out and there was no strong ruler in sight. Moreover the "Zemsky Sobor"

could not function because of increasing tension between the classes. Thus the Byzantine tradition failed to help the state over the crisis because it did not create the psychological atmosphere for citizenship nor the machinery of state for dealing with tension between the classes. And the tension grew because of the needs of the Tsar to create an army and to find the peasants to till the soil and secure recruits and taxes. It was this vicious circle which now prepared the ground for what is known as the "Time of Troubles."<sup>1</sup>

This period from 1584 to 1613 was characterised by constant struggle for the throne between rival claimants. First Boris Godunov, a boyar, became Tsar and ruled with ability, but he was dogged by the suspicion of having murdered one of Ivan the Terrible's sons.<sup>2</sup> Boris, moreover, failed to halt the growing chaos of the countryside, where famine and banditry brought about deserted villages and general exodus to the East. Pretenders then claimed the throne. An obscure monk went to Poland, embraced Catholicism, secured the armed support of the King of Poland and the disaffected Cossacks from the Ukraine and invaded Russia from the West. He finally reached Moscow after Boris's death and was crowned Tsar. He was overthrown and murdered in a popular revolt and the boyar, Vassily Shuisky, was then chosen Tsar. Cossacks and rebellious peasants from the South, fearing the rule of the boyars once more, then came North and laid siege to Moscow. The Polish King Sigismund advanced from the West and Tsar Vassily was deposed by the Poles and the Cossacks. A long period of fighting and intrigue resulted in a Polish army under Zolkiewsky reaching Moscow and setting up their authority there. Corrupt Moscow boyars then started negotiations with the Polish king in order that they might rule Russia in the name of Poland. The infuriated Cossacks and revolted peasant serfs laid siege to Moscow again but

<sup>1</sup> In Russian "smutnaya vremena."

<sup>2</sup> This incident of Russian history is well shown in Pushkin's great opera, *Boris Godunov*.

failed to oust the Poles. Anarchy then reigned supreme in Russia, the Poles had occupied Smolensk and the Swedes were in historic Novgorod. Salvation at last came from Nijni Novgorod on the Upper Volga, that heartland of Great Russia, where a local leader, Pozharsky, raised an army of citizens, marched on Moscow, and with the half-hearted support of the Cossacks and southern peasants drove out the Poles. Russia was free again and a "Zemsky Sobor" of representatives of all the chief towns and of the Church elected Michael Romanoff from a small boyar family to be Tsar of Russia.

This ended the "Time of Troubles." By the end of it the old boyar families of Moscow, weakened by Ivan and Boris, were now irreparably ruined and disappeared as a class from Russian history. They had tried to regain their former position when the dynasty died out. Because Boris would not do their work, some of them stooped to call in local Pretenders and when that failed, the foreigners to subjugate their own country. And of course the Polish king had no objection to profiting by Russia's weakness to extend his power. The Pope, too, saw a chance to bring heretical Russia into the Catholic fold. And the Polish nobility saw a chance to enlarge their estates in an easterly direction and rivet serfdom still firmer on the Russian peasants as they already had done in the Ukraine.

The invasion of the foreigners, however, roused Russian patriotism at last. As before in Russian history the Orthodox Church and the clergy were the rallying point. The Patriarch Hermogenes and the abbot of the Troitsky Sergievsky monastery led the spiritual uprising. In the past, if the Tsar had been the supreme autocrat in mundane affairs, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church was supreme in the region of the spirit. As a Russian historian of the Church puts it,<sup>1</sup> "the church was the spiritual adviser, the Christian conscience of the State." When the temporal power failed,

<sup>1</sup> Zernov, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

as it did now, the Orthodox Church upheld the torch which enabled Russian patriots to rally round the state once more. Here is seen the value to Russia of the Byzantine tradition which she inherited through the Orthodox Church. "In the East there was one state in which all authority was highly centralised: in Western Europe of the Middle Ages there was a welter of small states."<sup>1</sup> For Byzantium herself inherited not only Greek religion and philosophy, but also the tradition of the supremacy of the central state as first conceived in ancient Rome before the division of the Empire into East and West. When Western Rome was invaded by the barbarians from the North the whole state mechanism was destroyed and unification came again only in the sphere of religion and Church government. Hence the great power of the Pope and the chess-boarding of Europe into petty feudal states. This never happened to Byzantium. The Church remained supreme in her sphere, the state in its, and Russia inherited this tradition. The Tsar was morally bound to accept the advice of the Church on spiritual matters. In return the Tsar got the right to appoint Church dignitaries. The Orthodox Church did not aspire to temporal power like the Pope. On the other hand the Tsar did not meddle in things spiritual or in matters of doctrine. Till the eighteenth century at least there was a delicate balance of power between Church and State in Muscovite Russia. This served the state well, for when the Empire was threatened with dissolution at the Time of Troubles, the Church carried on the spiritual leadership round which the temporal power could once more crystallise. There was no attempt to create a Pope with temporal power in Moscow. The Patriarch became the centre round which the various elements of the state rallied, but he never sought to profit by the turmoil and to wield political power. So large sections of the community gathered round, but not all. The Cossacks and revolted peasants who had come from the South and East did not join with the clergy

<sup>1</sup> Baynes's *The Byzantine Empire*, pp. 238-239.

and the burghers of the towns to create a new régime, but went back to their homes on the steppes to hunt, fish and fight the Tartars. Thus the new dynasty of the Romanoffs supported by the Church, the landowning "dvorianie" and the merchants of the towns opened a new era in Russian history. From this time on the Byzantine idea of the appanage, the state as the private property of the autocrat, while still retained, was at least tempered with the idea of government with the consent, if not co-operation, of a National Assembly. And the "Zemsky Sobor," though it met very spasmodically, came for a time to play a more important part, as an advisory council to the Tsar, than hitherto.

## *Russia at the Cross-roads: Eastern or Western Influences?*<sup>1</sup>

THE first Romanoff Tsar, Michael, characterised a large part of his reign from 1613 to 1645 by seeking moral support from the "Zemsky Sobor." The same was true of Tsar Alexei, who in 1648 summoned one of the most important gatherings in the history of the Sobor to reform the legal code of Russia. Since the Time of Troubles the political support behind the Tsar came increasingly from the small landed nobility and from the urban population which was largely represented in the Sobor. The Tsar was, of course, all powerful, but the early Romanoffs wisely listened to the Sobor. Other councils also existed: for instance that of the boyars, but this older nobility had largely died out, and what remained had but little influence now. The Patriarchal Council of the Orthodox Church also met but it did not, except under Nikon, try to meddle in political affairs. The Orthodox Church in these days, while it was still independent, stood much more outside politics than did its Roman Catholic rival in the West. The spirit of the Eastern Church of Christendom was rather one of aloofness from the things of this earth.

It is significant that in the new Russia that grew out of the Time of Troubles class representation on the basis of function or profession remained the chief feature of what public institutions there were. There was no sign of an All-Russian Parliament coming into being. Representation of large and small nobility, urban merchants and clergy was there. Even the peasant serfs had their village council or "mir." But anything like a Parliament, similar to that which

<sup>1</sup> For the extent of the Muscovite Empire and its neighbours' territories during the period dealt with by this chapter see Map 2 (*at end*).

the Tudor and Stuart monarchies were dealing with in England, was at this period of history not found in Russia. The country was too large and the population too scattered and untrained in statecraft to conceive policies for the nation and Empire as a whole. It was the Tsar's duty to hear the different classes in their separate councils and then decide his policy.

The social disequilibrium which caused the Times of Troubles did not disappear with the coming of the Romanoffs. On the contrary the new land laws agreed to by Tsar Alexei increased the influence of the small landlords or "dvorianie," and allowed them greater power than ever to recover runaway serfs. Urban communities received the right to take over the land of peasants who had left the "mir." On the other hand the "mir" was strengthened because it was recognised for the first time by law, and an incentive was given to the peasants to remain in it. But the more drastic power of the landlords over the peasants only increased discontent. Runaway peasants increased and the recruits for the Cossack colonies in the lower Volga, Dnieper and Don multiplied. For the Cossacks this became a source of trouble. The Lower Dnieper Cossacks of the "Zaparozhie" had set up little fortresses on the islands of that river below the rapids and defied the Tsar to interfere with them. On the Don the Cossack communities refused to admit more runaway serfs, but allowed them to live in separate settlements and to work for the Cossacks. A ragged, half-starving lot thus settled in the East and soon serious trouble was afoot. For under the leadership of one, Stenka Razin, these poor Cossacks set off on plundering expeditions, first against the Tartars and Persians on the Caspian Sea and then against the Tsar himself and the towns of Central Russia. They acquired enormous booty in the East, and on the lower Volga they even captured important towns and were joined by serfs and impoverished peasants, who murdered their landlords and government officials. This was the first great agrarian revolt, although similar revolts on a smaller scale became a feature

of subsequent Russian history. It was really directed against the landlords and not so much against the Tsar. It aimed at sweeping away, but had no constructive plan. It was characteristic of the Russian peasant throughout history—volcanic revolt against injustice, destructive violence, followed by sudden subsidence. For the revolt of Stenka Razin subsided as quickly as it rose. His forces were defeated by the Tsar in 1671 and he was executed, the peasants sank back into serfdom and the Cossacks went back to their hunting and fishing on the frontiers.

Side by side with serfdom, poverty and sporadic revolt in the villages, the other classes of the new Russian society were developing in quite a different way. In circles round the Tsar, among the nobility and the town population new ideas were stirring. Influences from Western Europe were beginning to make themselves increasingly felt. Russia's isolation from the West was slowly disappearing. Traders, instructors for the army and technicians were coming to Russia from the West, while learned men came from the Greek world to make contact again with the clergy. A section of the people in the towns felt that Russia was backward, that she was barbarous, and that the Time of Troubles and the Cossack revolts were a disgrace. They were inclined to be ashamed of their country and thought that study of the West might remedy the situation. They hoped to treat the illness produced by the poison of serfdom by drinking the heady wine of Western education. Unfortunately the chasm between the peasant serf and the rest of the population became even greater than before. For if the new education was confined to only certain classes of the community and if one class and that the greatest in number was excluded, then the last state of Russia would be worse than the first.

Nevertheless the Western school had adherents in high places. One of Tsar Alexei's chief advisers, Ordin-Nashchokin, belonged to it. But his admiration of the West was qualified. He wanted to imitate with caution, to take from



the West only what Russia could assimilate. He was a forerunner of Peter the Great, but a man with greater discrimination than that potentate. This advocacy of Western methods in high places produced reactions. The isolationist school was soon up in arms against the innovators. The beginning of what became the Slavophil movement started to take shape. These people feared that Russia would lose her distinctive character, that the tradition of Greek Orthodoxy and Byzantine culture would be lost, that Catholicism from Poland would spread, that the Slav language and customs would disappear and the Third Rome vanish into history. Rather did they urge that Russia should seek co-operation with the Slavs of the Balkans and work for their liberation from Turkish rule and develop cultural relations with the Western Slavs. The protagonist of this school of thought was a learned Croatian, Yury Krizhanich, who came to Russia in 1659 with the definite purpose of uniting the Orthodox Slavs of Muscovite Russia, the Ukraine and the Balkans. He worked for an understanding among the Orthodox Slavs of each other's language as a common bond of culture, he sought improved educational methods and the training of character, so that Russian and Slav generally should be able to meet the learned people of the West and not feel inferior. Krizhanich might, indeed, be called the first great Slavophil, who sought means to create a cultural basis for that Eastern Slav civilisation of which Russia had become the temporal power.

Krizhanich and Ordin-Nashchokin were representatives of two opposing schools of thought which began to take shape in the early days of the Romanoff dynasty and ran down through Russian history to modern times. But the ideas of neither could bear good fruit as long as the unsoundness which had crept into the social foundations of Russia since the victory over the Tartars was not removed. The basis of that unsoundness of course was serfdom, originally a by-product of the Tsar's need to fill his fighting services for the

vital necessity of protecting Russia's wide land frontiers, but now gradually becoming a vested interest for the new form of landownership which arose after the Time of Troubles. The tragedy of Russia throughout these years and later was that the imperative need of a strong central power to prevent Tartar raids and fissiparous tendencies of the already huge territories of the Tsar demanded ever greater obligations from the peasantry than had been necessary in the early days of the Kiev Principality before the foundation of the Empire. Thus the political consolidation and the expansion of Russia brought a decrease of liberty for the principal subjects of the Tsar, and the country was too large and the people too scattered to develop a social conscience to solve these grave internal problems.

Nor was the Church very helpful in this situation. By tradition it left political leadership to the Tsar and concerned itself solely with spiritual matters and the creation of a mystic bond of communion among the Church's flock. But the Church, too, was at the crossways. Her policy, as far as it had a political implication, was in the direction of isolation from Europe and in favour of the creation of an Eastern Empire under the spiritual direction of the Orthodox Church. But as Western European ideas of life and government with material improvements began to gain influence even in Russia, the Church was faced with the problem of how to react towards them. The Church leaders, of course, wished to resist them and stood by the Eastern school of thought, but, if that policy was to be carried out in the new conditions that were developing, Russia would have to give up her conservative isolationism and take a direct interest in the political affairs of the peoples to the west and south of her frontiers, if only to effectively resist Western influences and protect the interests of her brother Slavs. The Tsar at this time was even considering military intervention in Poland and South-East Europe on behalf of Orthodox brethren there. But this meant that the Russian Church must unbend

and try to understand the views and outlook of the members of the Orthodox Church who were not Russian. And this was hard for it, because many changes and innovations had taken place in Greek ritual and ideas during recent centuries. But the Russian Church had adopted a policy of extreme conservatism in these matters, and regarded the Greek and other Orthodox churches as inferior to theirs, as corrupted with Western influences and claimed that, as the Third Rome, Russia alone held the true faith by which humanity could be saved.

But in 1652 there came to the Patriarchal throne in Moscow a young and forceful character, Nikon, former Archbishop of Novgorod. He saw the need for Russia to abandon her spiritual snobbishness and make contact on the basis of mutual understanding between Russian, Greek and Balkan Orthodox Christian. On this basis alone, as he saw it, could Eastern Christianity successfully resist the West. In essence Nikon, too, was an Easterner and opposed to the Westernisation of Russia, but he realised the need for reform of the Church in order the better to strengthen it. But he was a man of domineering temperament who would not be disobeyed. So when he insisted on certain innovations in Church services and rites which would pave the way, as he thought, for greater co-operation with the Orthodox Christians outside Russia, and when the conservative element inside the Russian Church rebelled, he proceeded against them with all the rigour of the ecclesiastical law that was at his command. Whether a more diplomatic man could have got the Russian Church over this crisis without a split is a matter of conjecture now, but there can be little doubt that his dictatorial methods gravely weakened the Church for the greater trials that were to come. The schism, which developed in the Church during the last half of the seventeenth century and resulted in the creation of the sect of the Old Believers, was a monument during the centuries that followed to the attempt of Patriarch Nikon to bring about a strong Eastern Church

with Russia as the spiritual leader. But this attempt was wrecked by a common Russian characteristic of lack of a spirit of compromise, a habit of mind which sees all or nothing as the only two ways out. Thus, as in affairs of the State so in affairs of the Church, Russia remained at the crossroads, undecided which way to go, till some forceful temporal ruler came along and made up her mind for her.

*Peter the Great and Western Reforms*

THE second Romanoff Tsar, Alexei Michaelovitch, died in 1676. The short reign of his son Fedor by his first wife lasted only six years, for both he and his brother Ivan were weakly. So it came about that their half-brother, Peter, became Tsar in 1682. Intrigues of boyars, plots and counter-plots inside his family circle, periodical revolts of the "Streletsy," or guards, made the early life of young Peter unenviable. Much of his time was spent in a village outside Moscow where he busied himself with playing at soldiers, building forts of sand and earth and laying the foundations of his knowledge of military science. His mother was a Westerner in outlook and had foreigners in her entourage. Thus from early times Peter learnt to value the Western European as someone who could teach him something.

Russia was at this time becoming ripe for the spread of Western European knowledge, science and technique. An increasing number of Russians, especially in the towns, were becoming aware of their country's backwardness. The army had not the latest type of artillery, the few engineers were mostly foreigners and the number of people engaged in foreign trade were very small in comparison with potentialities. So the coming to power of Peter coincided with the recognition by an important section of the population that Russia needed a period of modernisation on the Western European model. There remained another important part of the population who followed what was left of the old boyar aristocracy and the Orthodox Church and who feared Western innovations and held to the Eastern school of isolation. But a strong-willed Tsar was in a position to tilt the balance in the way he desired.

Moreover Peter, as soon as he was well in the saddle,

began so to strengthen the power of the throne that authoritarian government became established in Russia more firmly than ever before. At a time when Britain had just fought her civil war and established the right of her Parliament to control the people's purse, at a time when the last Stuart king was being sent into exile because he could not be trusted to reign by consent of the elected representatives of the people, Russia was losing what little popular control her system of government had had in the past. Byzantine theocratic tradition, reinforced by the Moscovite system of military centralisation, had now become an autocracy for the purpose of forcibly modernising the half-Asiatic Russian state. In Britain the use of the printing press and the discoveries of Isaac Newton had led to increased popular knowledge and the gradually expanding liberties of the common citizen. In Russia the application of these same discoveries and inventions led to precisely the opposite. The Tsar became all-powerful, while the peasants sank into ever deeper and more helpless subjection. The primitive communism of early Slav society became increasingly submerged as a result of the coming of influences from Western Europe. Well may the Eastern school of isolationists have shaken their heads and longed for their ideal Eastern Slav state which in due course would be a shining light to all Europe. But now for the time being at least Slavophilism must retire into the background.

With the coming of Peter the Great there disappeared the beginnings of popular control which could be discerned when in the first two Romanoff reigns the "Zemsky Sobor" confirmed the election of the Tsar and was consulted on all major issues of the state. But for some time before Peter came to the throne the Sobor had not been summoned at all, and on the last occasion when it had been the Tsar had called for only those classes and groups of occupations whom he especially wanted to consult. The Sobor in fact was during a large part of Tsar Alexei's reign no longer an assembly of all the occupations of Russia but of privileged groups whom the Tsar

wanted to appease. Thus the Sobor became less representative than it was before. Moreover, after Peter came to the throne even the one occasion on which the Sobor had always been summoned, namely to ratify the accession of a new Tsar to the throne, was dropped, for Peter laid it down that the Tsar alone had the right to decide who should succeed him. This re-established again the old Muscovite appanage tradition, which had been modified somewhat in early Romanoff days, that the state is the private property of the Tsar.

To do Peter justice he reinforced one of the traditions of the Byzantine Empire; that all classes must serve the State. Peter made the landowning aristocracy and the sons of the Moscow nobility do this in one form or another. No one was exempt. Everyone had to begin at the bottom and promotion went by merit only. Government ranks or "tchins" were established. The smaller aristocracy or "dvorianie" were remunerated by salary, not necessarily by grants of land, as hitherto. The only concession was made to the higher nobility. They were allowed to form certain regiments apart from the rest of the army, but even they had to work and do responsible jobs. The old boyars' Duma, which used to give advice to the Tsar, was abolished. Instead a body called the Senate was appointed, consisting of the higher grades of the new bureaucracy, or civil service, whose duty it was to administer the law decreed by himself. Meanwhile the peasantry were submerged ever deeper into serfdom as a result of Peter's reforms. Even the free peasants or "volnitsa," i.e. persons with no regular abode, such as travelling craftsmen and tinkers, of whom there were still a large number left in each village, were classed along with the landlords' domestic serfs for purposes of capitation tax, and in time became indistinguishable from them. Thus the landlord became the serf-owner of the whole village, responsible to the Tsar for taxes and military service. But in spite of all this the "mir" still existed to voice complaints and ask for

justice. The spirit of old Russia could not be altogether crushed. The chief favourites of Peter, however, were the population of the towns. These he treated leniently in regard to taxes and state service, and he allowed the merchants' and craftsmen's guilds a degree of self-government, for he wanted to encourage industry and commerce. But in this he was only partially successful, for the constant wars of his reign destroyed much of the trade he was trying to build up, and Russia's towns and industry still remained the least important element in Russian social life.

Another very important change made by Peter was in connection with the Orthodox Church. This venerable institution was naturally a hot-bed of opposition to his reforms. It was the heart and soul of the Eastern tradition and of anti-Western prejudice. It felt itself the guardian of the tradition of Byzantine Christianity and of Moscow as the Third Rome. By many church leaders and particularly by the "Old Believers" he was denounced as anti-Christ. On the death of the Patriarch Adrian Peter refused to permit the appointment of a successor. Some years later he appointed a "Holy Synod" consisting of church leaders whom he could trust to control the church in the way desired by himself. At one stroke, therefore the church lost its self-government and became a department of the Russian state. This was in many respects a disastrous step, for in years to come when the State became very unpopular and was threatened by revolutionary movements, the Church, which had become just an organ of secular government, bore a portion of the responsibility for unpopularity. Anti-religious movements in Russia can largely be traced back to this important historic fact. They were in their origin anti-ecclesiastical rather than anti-religious, though at times they became that as well. The cause was undoubtedly the making of the Russian Church into a department of the government by Peter the Great.

Peter's burning desire to learn from the West did not necessarily mean peace with the West. On the contrary his



determination that Russia should develop international trade relations forced him to seek a port on one of the Western seas. And the nearest sea on the West was the Baltic. Thus he came at once into conflict with the one great power in Northern Europe, Sweden. Peter's principal wars were with Sweden. The Turks and Tartars were Russia's hereditary enemies, but so important did Peter feel was a Western foreign policy to obtain shipping facilities and ports on the Baltic that he abandoned any idea of further Eastern campaigns, at least for the time being. He got possession of the fort of Azov after a sharp struggle with the Turks, and so, feeling reasonably secure against raids from the Crimean Tartars, he turned his face to the West. But if his Western policy meant war with Sweden, that was not the case with his relations with other Western powers. From these he wanted not ports but instructors and technical assistants. So he made his "Grand Embassy" in 1697 and travelled by way of Prussia, where he visited King Frederick William and learnt how that monarch had remodelled his state and modernised his administration. From there he went to Holland and England where he worked in dockyards learning shipbuilding. Thus strengthened with knowledge and equipment from the West he returned to launch a Russian offensive against the West, or at least against that one Western power which had control of the Baltic. It was the East Baltic, and particularly the Gulf of Finland, that he wanted as a basis for his sea power and foreign commerce. In 1700 the great Northern War started. Assisted by Poland as an ally under the rule of Augustus, also Elector of Saxony, Peter launched a surprise attack on Swedish forts on the shores of Lake Ladoga and near the mouth of the Neva. The Swedes were overwhelmed and in 1703 St. Petersburg was founded on the Neva swamps as a prelude to the creation of the naval base at Kronstadt. The King of Sweden, Charles XII, however, now turned on Poland and forced Augustus to make peace. So Peter was isolated, and had to face a Swedish invasion

via Poland and the Ukraine. Here the Ukrainian "hetman," Mazeppa, was prepared to aid Sweden against Moscow. In the Eastern Ukraine especially, the Cossack leaders were afraid of Moscow, because they feared that the Tsar wanted to bring them under his direct control for the purpose of organising immigration from Central Russia into the Eastern territories. Mazeppa, as their leader, was prepared to co-operate with Poland and with Sweden against the Tsar. The peasants of the Western Ukraine, however, were not enamoured of their Polish landlords and on the whole favoured Moscow. Then Peter struck at Mazeppa and crushed his forces, turned on the Cossacks and crushed them. So by the time the Swedish army, which had gone to their rescue, had reached Poltava in the Eastern Ukraine, Peter was ready for them and in the crowning triumph of his career, in 1709 at the battle of Poltava, he broke Sweden's military power and established himself firmly in the Eastern Baltic and on the Gulf of Finland.<sup>1</sup> In the course of her history till now Russia had never made a successful military offensive against the West. But in Peter's day she did, in the campaign which ended at Poltava, make a most successful offensive against a Western power which had established itself on East European waters and seaboard. She also, at last, firmly established herself in the Eastern Ukraine, and was able once more to turn against the Turks and Tartars. But in this last enterprise Peter was less successful. The country, exhausted by the great Northern War, was in no condition now to challenge the Sultan, and Peter's army would have had to surrender on the Pruth in 1711 had not the Turks rather magnanimously agreed to negotiate on condition of receiving back from Russia the recently captured fort at Azov. Thus Russia was weakened in the East again, but to offset this Peter made a successful expedition down the Western shores of the Caspian Sea against Persia where he secured important ports for Russia's Eastern commerce. Thus, Peter, before his death

<sup>1</sup> See Map 3 (*at end*).

in 1725 saw Russia established on two seas, the Baltic and the Caspian. But the Turks still barred the way to the Black Sea.

Summing up the life of Peter the Great, then, one may say that he was a patriotic Russian who did not love the West for its own sake, but only for what Russia might be able to learn from it for her own advantage. Once he is reported to have said: "For a few score years we shall need Europe; then we shall be able to turn our backs on her." Perhaps the best comment on Peter's life and work is to be found in Kliuchefsky's *Russian History*<sup>1</sup> . . . "his reforms were a threefold struggle between a despotism, a people and a people's instinct, a struggle in which, using his authority as a menace, he constantly strove to spur a community of serfs into self-action and yet to make his 'dvorianstvo' (aristocracy) that community's own enserfer and the introducer of European science and enlightenment. . . . The simile most commonly employed by those thinkers when treating of the Petrine dispensation was to liken it to one of those spring showers, which though boisterous enough to strip trees of their boughs, yet freshen the air and stimulate growth." But it was the existence of serfdom, now more firmly established than ever, that made the chasm between the enlightened and unenlightened in Russia ever greater.

<sup>1</sup> *History of Russia*, vol. iv, pp. 228-229.

*Prussian Influences, the Period of Court Favourites and the Reign of Catharine II*

THE death of Peter the Great saw Russia in a state of complete exhaustion. It is very doubtful if the country could have stood the strain of further wars and reforms even if he had lived. The taxable resources of the country and its manpower were diminishing and the peasants were seeking their usual method of relief by illegal flight to the Cossack lands and the Tartar borders. At the other end of the social scale the reaction from the Petrine tornado took the form of permitting the landed nobility to escape from their newly-imposed obligations of state service, while they retained their powers as tax collectors and serf owners. This was the new privileged class which had gradually grown up out of the ruins of the old boyar ruling families. The smaller nobility of the days of Ivan the Terrible had become the only nobility by coalescing with the remnants of the older class. Peter's titanic energy had for a while made this class conform to his will and to the service of the state. But the moment Peter was dead their one interest was to revert to the old position of privilege and parasitism. Russia's fate in the immediate post-Petrine era was thus even more tragic than before. If Western reforms brought increased despotism at the centre, the reaction that followed them brought weak autocrats, bolstered up by the landed nobility, which thus became the chief power in the state.

To make matters worse there was a period during which Russia was, as in the Time of Troubles, virtually ruled by foreigners, and worse still by Germans. In order to retain their privileged position as serf-owners the landed nobility were not averse to accepting indirect German rule; to such

a despicable state had the Russian aristocracy fallen! The years 1725 to 1741 were known as the Period of the Favourites. Councils of the Nobility, sitting in St. Petersburg, offered the throne of Russia to any princeling who would agree to leave them with their privileges. They need only have remote connection with the reigning Romanoff family. A weak character and ill-health were the best keys which opened the door to the Russian crown. In five years there were three rulers. Then for ten years Anna, a Baltic German by up-bringing, who was a daughter of Peter the Great's half-brother, was made Empress by the Privy Council representing the nobility. Her reign was possibly the blackest in Russian history. She filled the Court with German favourites from Courland and Prussia. Her chief favourite, one Biron, made it his task to gratify his Imperial mistress with every kind of luxury and extravagance, while he levied increasing taxation on the peasants and even extracted arrears to the last kopeck. As Kliuchefsky shrewdly writes,<sup>1</sup> "Practically the system was a repetition of the Tartar raids, save for the fact that now the raiders' base of operations was the raided's own capital city." In this period of Russian history one sees more clearly perhaps than at any other the baneful influence of the German, particularly the Prussian, system of government and general outlook. Frederick the Great and his father may have done for Prussia what Peter did for Russia, namely, set up a despotism over a privileged aristocracy. But the net result was that when the strong ruler was gone serfdom was more firmly fixed in East Prussia and the Baltic territories than anywhere else, and the class in Russia seeking to profit from serfdom looked across the frontier to German influence to help them to maintain their privileges. Polish influence on Russia was also not good in this respect, but Poland was now weak and sinking to decline. Prussia remained the evil genius behind all Russian reactionary movements. This was particularly the case in the period

<sup>1</sup> *History of Russia*, vol. iv, p. 309.

following Peter the Great's death, and it continued with breaks right through till recent times.

Fortunately from 1741 to 1761 there was a Russian national revival. Elizabeth, a daughter of Peter the Great, became Empress. She cleared out the Germans and changed the whole atmosphere of the Court. But she was not strong enough to continue the work of her father or make the landed nobility shoulder their obligations to the state once more. She was, moreover, subjected to many influences. There was, during her reign, a breath of intellectual Liberalism stirring in Europe, and this had some effect on her. But at other times she was inclined to support the policy of Eastern Slav isolation and of the Slavophiles. Her anti-German feeling went far enough to bring Russia into the Seven Years' War, and at great sacrifice Russian armies invaded Prussia and after one great victory Cossack cavalry were seen in the streets of Berlin. Her death largely saved Frederick the Great, for her successor, Peter III, a grandson of Peter the Great, was a Germanophile and at once made peace with Prussia, nullifying all Russia's victories. He was a poor specimen, but he was married to a princess from a small state in Middle Germany, who in due course superseded him and became the patriotic Russian Empress, Catharine the Great, reigning from 1762 to 1796.

Few sovereigns in Russian history left their mark on their country more than Catharine II did. During her reign French philosophy and the writing of Voltaire were spreading throughout Europe and not even Russia with its feudal land system and serfdom could escape altogether that influence. Catharine in the early part of her reign had much sympathy with these ideas. Though German by birth she soon threw herself wholeheartedly into the cause of her adopted country and sponsored good relations with France rather than with Germany. She reversed the Germanophil policy of her husband and considerably cooled off Russia's relations with the Court of Prussia. At first she coquetted with the idea of a

Northern Alliance of Russia, Prussia, Poland, the Scandinavian countries and England against the alliance of Austria and France. But, developing a strong suspicion of the Prussian king and Court, Catharine abandoned this idea and turned to France for cultural inspiration and to the East for the basis of her diplomacy and Empire building. The rationalist philosophy of the French school became the basis of her home policy or at least she tried to make it so. She believed in benevolent despotism for Russia, and feared Prussian despotism because she did not think it enlightened; the fact that she came originally from a small German court caused her to have no love for Prussia. Thus if she was Western in a spiritual sense, it was to France that she turned for guidance, unlike Peter the Great, whose interests were mainly material and who looked to the West also, but to Prussia for state administration and to England and Holland for science and industry. On the other hand her reign in effect was characterized less by the spread of French ideas in Russia than in the further building up of an Eastern Slav Empire. The result of her reign was really the fruition of the Slav idea, for she greatly expanded the territories of Russia in the South and East at the expense of the Turks and Tartars. But in practice her patriarchal Liberalism and French rationalist philosophy foundered on the rock of Russian aristocratic privilege. For her landed nobility were not going to allow their sovereign's Western whims to interfere with their hold on the Russian peasants and their freedom from obligations to serve the state. And she was not strong enough of herself to overcome their obstruction and in time she began perhaps to doubt the wisdom of her earlier ideas. Having at first encouraged discussion about serfdom and the land system of Russia, she later became frightened when the Cossacks and some peasant serfs showed their indifference to the philosophy of Voltaire, but evinced robust and forcible methods of defending their liberties against the constant encroachments of landlords. For in 1771 the Cossacks, many of whom had

moved to the Urals to escape being roped into the new Government administration of the Don, raised a revolt when attempts were made by Catharine to bring in the Urals, too, and put an end to the virtual independence of those remoter Cossack communities. Led by a man called Pugachef, the Cossacks, joined by peasant serfs from the Lower Volga, swept westwards and for a time carried all before them, till they were suppressed. The unhealthy state of the Russian agrarian system was never better shown than by these sudden explosions of poor Cossacks and peasants. Yet now Catharine forgot her French philosophy and rallied to her nobility and, the rebellion was crushed. She then turned round and gave her nobility further very wide privileges. They were now completely and legally freed from all obligations of state service, whereas the status of the peasants was unchanged. It is interesting to note that, as in the case of Stenka Razin, the followers of Pugachef did not rise against the Empress but against their feudal lords, who, they said, had usurped powers which belonged to her. They stood for the old Byzantine idea that all subjects of the Empress were equal under her and were bound to serve her and she to protect them. Thus it is made clear by the Pugachef revolt that the masses of the peasants and Cossacks believed in the old Russian system, and that serfdom was a relatively modern and non-Russian institution.

Catharine, of course, tried to extend the system of limited popular representation by summoning from time to time a selected Zemsky Sobor or conference of classes of the community to advise her on projected reforms. Thus in 1766 she summoned the landed nobility, the guilds and merchants of the larger towns and those few elements in the villages that were still free to come and advise her on the reform of the Legal Code. She wanted permanently to have this advisory body which was typically Russian and was based on economic groupings and social functions of citizens in the state. The autocrat was to rule and make laws, but the people organized



by professions and occupations could send representatives to advise her. This elementary eighteenth century Soviet Congress met in Catharine's reign, and out of this came the recognition by the Empress that these classes and professions had the right to elect their delegates. This was recognized, too, by later sovereigns, but after a while only the landed nobility exercised this right, the other groups dropping away in apathy and indifference. Russia at this time was a state in which the germ was present of popular functional representation, but the size of the country and the political ignorance of the masses made it a prey to sporadic outbreaks of violence, while the real political influence behind the throne remained the small coterie of powerful landowners. The latter even succeeded in Catharine's reign in securing permanent access to the local governors to protect their economic interests and look after their runaway serfs. The larger urban communities also exercised rights of access for the purpose of advice to the sovereigns, but few towns were large or influential enough to make their weight much felt in the councils of the state. The dead hand of the serf-owning aristocracy lay heavily on Russia, and Catharine, who started with enlightened ideas, gradually became disheartened, particularly after the Pugachef rebellion. In 1789 the French Revolution added further to the doubts of all those in Russia who were groping their way to the recognition of liberty and of civil rights for the individual citizen. Nevertheless Catharine's reign brought many reforms in the state administration, the beginnings of an educational system and a general atmosphere of liberality, in theory at least, to social problems. In her reign, too, a great Russian general, Count Suvarof, came to the fore. He took great care of his soldiers, went among them and gained their confidence. He introduced new tactics in war and was so successful that he never lost a battle in all the wars in which Catharine engaged him. He carried on a tradition of military genius which the Russians have from time to time shown in their history, and many of the successful Russian

generals of the Napoleonic wars had to thank Suvarof for their training.

In the building up of the Eastern Empire Suvarof's campaign in the reign of Catharine played an important role. The Russian frontiers were brought down to the northern shores of the Black Sea, including the Crimea. The Turks were driven out and the Crimean Tartars made subject to Catharine after a Russo-Turkish war from 1787 to 1791. The other big acquisition that came to Catharine was the whole of the Eastern half of Poland, which was finally partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1795.<sup>1</sup> This disastrous blunder laid the seeds of much future trouble, but under the circumstances could be understood, if not justified, in view of the anarchy and lawlessness of the Polish aristocracy. Thus at the end of her reign Catharine had carried forward Peter the Great's plan of consolidating an outlet for Russia on a western seaboard. Russia was now settled on the Eastern Baltic, and Prussia and Sweden were warned off this ground. Poland and Lithuania were carved up and partly incorporated into Russia, thus bringing into the Russian Empire a large mixed population on her western frontiers—a cause of future weakness. Lastly, where Peter the Great had largely failed, Catharine had taken the first real steps to enable Russia to hold out her hand to her Slav brothers in the Balkans and take under her protection the ancient and romantic kingdom of Georgia, with its Greek Orthodox people. On balance it may be said perhaps that she carried forward most successfully the Eastern policy of the Russian Empire.

<sup>1</sup> See Map 3 (*at end*); for annexations in 1774 and 1794 from Ottoman Empire and Poland.

## *The Influence of the French Revolution and Its Reaction*

AFTER Catharine's death there was the short reign of her son, Paul. Again the trend of Russian policy both at home and abroad was dependent on the character of one man, and Paul, having always harboured a bitter personal resentment against his mother, reversed her foreign policy, became friendly with the Prussian Court again and abandoned French contacts and influences. But, like his mother, he had no use for his landed nobility and he too tried to curb their power. Becoming finally almost insane in his behaviour, he was killed in a conspiracy to remove him from the throne. His son, Alexander I, in his turn revived the policy of his grandmother, the Empress Catharine. He surrounded himself with advisers steeped in the ideas of the French Revolution and burning with a desire to get rid of serfdom and to grant a constitution to the Russian people. His chief adviser, Michael Speranski, drew up a plan of constitutional reform which actually was to give popular representation to the Russian people. There was to be a council, or Duma, in every district composed of delegates from the landowners and one from every five hundred peasants. The trading and urban population would have their Duma also, and all would send delegates to higher provincial "councils," and these to an Imperial Duma in the capital. These bodies were to advise the Emperor on all matters of state, and so in effect the principle of autocratic rule remained absolute. But the interesting point about this scheme was that it resembled in many ways the old "Zemsky Sobor," and indeed it was probably founded on it. It was to be composed of organised classes and professions such as landlords, traders and peasants, each having their special representa-

tives. The idea of a citizen electing a representative as a citizen was not accepted. The citizen must be represented as a landlord, merchant or peasant in the legislature. Russian thinkers at this time, like Speranski, were interpreting the French Revolution in a manner in keeping with the Russian preference for councils based on occupation.

But after a while the Emperor Alexander began to be afraid of his own courage. The French Revolution was by this time developing into its phase of Napoleonic Imperialism. The knowledge of this had a profound effect on all classes in Russia, from the Emperor downwards. The small Russian, privileged class feared the ideas of the French Revolution from the start, but now the despotic actions of Napoleon and his obvious intention to dominate Europe by force aroused the inarticulate Russian masses, and laid the foundations of a real national revival and resistance to foreign aggression. Speranski's constitutional reforms were dropped and he fell into disfavour. But before he left he made several important changes in the machinery of government which strengthened the bureaucracy and carried forward the work started by Peter the Great. From now onward the landed nobility, though still the dominant influence next to the Emperor, was gradually being overshadowed by the new class of state administrators or bureaucrats which, in part, were recruited from the nobility, but also, and increasingly, from the urban middle classes.

The foreign policy of Russia during the reign of Alexander I (1801-25) was at first dominated by the French Revolution and Napoleon. Alexander was, in his early years, bent on reform at home and wanted to keep Russia out of wars abroad, but he soon found this impossible and so he went into alliance with England and Austria against Napoleon. After the latter had crushed Prussia at Jena and driven the Russian army back across the Niemen river, Alexander suddenly reversed his foreign policy and made a treaty of alliance with Napoleon at Tilsit. Under this he entered into the

Napoleonic "continental system" for the blockade of Britain. He appeared to make Russia a pawn in the game of Napoleon to master Europe, the Near and Middle East and India. This huge continental block would, if it came into existence, ultimately neutralise Britain's sea power. But the idea of making Russia subservient to French foreign policy was rejected by popular feeling in the country, as expressed partly through the Court and extensively through the smaller landed gentry and the merchants of the towns. It was felt that Russia must not be subjected to another Tartar yoke, even though it might not take the crude form of that of Uzbek Khan. Alexander found therefore a strong body of opinion, which he must reckon with, opposing his foreign policy. But it is questionable whether he really believed in his policy. It has been thought that in this he showed a weak and vacillating nature, but it is equally probable that after Jena he thought it better not to resist Napoleon's victorious march and temporarily bow before the storm, husbanding Russia's resources and waiting his opportunity, like another great Russian leader did with Germany a century and a quarter later. Soon Napoleon saw the game that Alexander was playing. He toyed with the idea of emancipating the serfs in Poland in order to weaken Alexander with the Poles, and he finally decided on war when it was clear that Alexander was not holding fast to the continental blockade of England. There followed the historic campaign of 1812. In this campaign the Russian people showed not only their immense power of endurance and patience in long retreat against the numerically superior Grand Army, but also a power of military organisation and patriotic fervour which was the admiration of all Europe. Once again, as in the days when they were resisting the Tartar hordes, the Russian peasants burnt their homes and carried away their supplies into the forests of the North rather than let them fall into the hands of the hated invader. Meanwhile they harried the enemy's rear by the deadly stings of guerilla bands. The fate of Napoleon was thus sealed.

Russia became now an ally of Britain in the defeat of Napoleon and in the post-war settlement. This was the first time that there had been any co-operation between Britain and Russia in a great international enterprise. It was for a time highly successful, but the alliance did not last. After Alexander's day Russian expansion in Asia aroused British anxieties over India. Moreover, the *rapprochement* between the two countries only really affected the upper classes of society. The common people had no contact with or understanding for each other. Hence the Anglo-Russian friendship during the Napoleonic wars was dissipated in nineteenth century Asiatic rivalries. Another cause of misunderstanding was the well-meaning plan of Alexander I for a so-called Holy Alliance, which was put forward during the peace negotiations in Paris in 1815 as part of a general European settlement. As he conceived it the sovereigns of Europe were to bind themselves to live in peace and in true Christian brotherhood, to aid each other in preserving peace and govern their people as "fathers of their families." Here the Byzantine tradition of theocratic rule is seen again promulgated by a nineteenth century Russian Emperor. Unfortunately these high ideals were distorted to serve mean ends by statesmen like the Austrian Metternich. For him the Holy Alliance was to be used to suppress popular movements against sovereigns and governments in all countries and maintain legitimate rule and privileged reaction in power indefinitely. The result was the cooling off of all Liberal thought, particularly in England, for all the plans and policies of Alexander, and so this sensitive and high-minded monarch became more and more disillusioned and gave himself up to religion and mysticism, while he allowed his government increasingly to get into the hands of reactionary advisers. And so his life petered out. On his death misunderstandings arose over his successor. He had no direct heir and his next brother, Constantine, renounced the throne, which now went to the much younger brother Nicolas. In the delays that followed the

clearing up of the succession muddle which Alexander had left, a number of young aristocrats and army officers conceived the idea of a palace revolution and the setting up of a constitution on the lines of the French Revolution. The abortive "December revolt," as it was called, had no backing in the country and was easily suppressed by Nicolas who had none of his elder brother's sensitiveness and liberal mysticism.

Thus the influence of the French Revolution died out in Russia, and on balance authoritarian rule was strengthened and the serf-owning nobility confirmed in their privileges. While France, and indeed all Western Europe, were slowly feeling their way towards popular government and civic liberty as a result of the great upheavals in France and the wars with Napoleon, Russia remained in the main unaffected, as she had so often in the past, by the movements of Western Europe. She was entering once more into a period of semi-Asiatic isolation and of confirmation of her Eastern Slav traditions and culture. Yet the French Revolution did leave a legacy of liberalism in thought and literature, which reached its high point in the poet Pushkin at this time. The romantic school of Russian authors were influenced by writers of a similar school in England, such as Byron, and here perhaps a more hopeful foundation was laid for an Anglo-Russian understanding of the future.

Nicholas I, who reigned from 1825 to 1855 was made of sterner stuff than his brother, Alexander, though he had had no training for his high office. He had put down the December rising, so had little use for the intellectual aristocracy who had engineered it. Unbending autocrat that he was, the first act of his reign was to decimate the ranks of the aristocracy who had dared to think that the reform of society could come in any other way than from above or through a benevolent autocrat. Politically the landed nobility was now crushed, and the Emperor and the growing and powerful bureaucracy were now the undisputed rulers of Russia. There seemed to be no rival to the autocrat and the middle classes were still

too weak to do other than bask in the sunshine of Imperial favours when it came their way. Meanwhile the economic power also of the landed nobility was being steadily undermined. For serfdom in effect no longer paid, and estates were becoming increasingly insolvent. The Emperor decided in principle that serfdom must go, seeing, as he did, the gradual growth of industry and commerce in Russia. The next stage of Russia's economic development was now being reached, the stage that Britain had commenced some four centuries earlier. But the Emperor feared that a sudden abolition of serfdom would cause grave dislocation and set big revolutionary movements in progress, so he decided to act cautiously. He started by giving certain local government powers to the peasant communes on State lands, and followed it up by permitting private owners to free their serfs. Nothing came of this latter permissive legislation and Nicolas hesitated to take further steps. His fear of social chaos got the better of him and he spent a portion of his energies in stopping up all outlets of popular discontents. He started to improve education by the founding of the "gymnasia" type of school, but sought to bring it under strict control and allow no spread of "dangerous ideas." On balance reaction lay heavily on Russia during the reign of Nicolas I, in spite of Imperial gestures for controlled reform. It was an intermediate period: the darkness of the night before the dawn.

For in spite of everything new ideas were active all through the reign of Nicolas I. All educated people of the aristocracy and middle class were hostile to the Emperor and this brought about a most unhealthy state of affairs which continued right up to the end of the Tsarist régime in 1917. The best brains and intellects of Russia would not serve the Emperor but went into sullen hostility. The autocracy could not attract ability because there was now again no permanent popular representation, even of an advisory type like the Zemsky Sobor. So the Emperor's bureaucracy was confined mainly to second-class brains, and political deadlock became too often



the order of the day, laying thereby the foundation of Revolution.

The ideas which spread in the reign of Nicolas I were really new forms of the two great divisions of Russian thought which have existed from quite early times; the Eastern and Western school. The Eastern school now called itself Slavophil. It held that Eastern Christianity and ancient institutions separated Russia decisively from Western Europe. The Greek Orthodox Church's appeal was to the emotions and to authority, that of the Western Church to reason, and as far as the Protestants were concerned, to democracy. The ancient Slavs also had created communal peasant societies. These must be preserved, and Russia must avoid the sordid materialism of the West and build her own society on village co-operatives. According to the leaders of this movement, like Homiakoff, Peter the Great had done Russia much disservice.

The Western school on the other hand, led by men like Bielinski, held that Russia was merely the rest of Europe only four hundred years behind in arrested development. It was her task now to catch up. Feudalism and serfdom had gone in England by the fifteenth century, but Russia still had it. In Germany new philosophies had come, based on the teachings of Kant and Hegel. In France, Voltaire and the Revolution had set forth a flood of new ideas. In England science and trade had made great strides. Let Russia imitate and make up for the backwardness caused by the handicap of the Tartar invasions which the West had escaped. That roughly was the ideological background of these two great schools of Russian thought. Both could make out a case for their point of view. Both, in spite of their differences, were agreed that the welfare of Russia could not be allowed indefinitely to depend on the will and capabilities of a single man, whose temperament varied from father to son and whose executive organ was a bureaucracy not containing the best intellects in the country.

As far as the foreign relations of Russia during Nicolas I's reign was concerned it was the Slavophil idea that got the most satisfaction. The building of a strong Eastern Empire and the liberation of brother Slavs of the Balkans from Turkish rule became the keystone of Russian policy. The autocrat Nicolas had no desire to assist the Greeks to free themselves from their "legitimate" sovereign, the Sultan, since in keeping with Metternich's interpretation of the Holy Alliance he regarded them as rebels. But he could not quite ignore public opinion even in Russia. So he went to war with Turkey in 1829 and defeated the Turkish fleet at Navarino, invaded the Balkans and Armenia and finally made peace with the Sultan, securing the freedom of Greece, the Eastern shore of the Black Sea and annexing an additional strip of territory in Transcaucasia. Already in the reign of Paul the ancient kingdom of Georgia, to save itself from absorption by the Sultan or the Shah, had thrown in its lot with its great Christian neighbour in the North. The Georgians had thus become Russian subjects and added another racial element to the Eastern Empire. Between 1826 and 1828 Nicolas went to war with the Shah of Persia, and at the Treaty of Turkmanchay annexed further territory in Armenia and Azerbaijan. This brought Shiah Tartars and more Armenian subjects into the Empire and made more varied still the races who acknowledged the suzerainty of the Tsar. All these people came into the Empire on the basis of racial equality. Whatever privileges or disabilities the Slav subjects of the Empire had, so also had the Tartar, Georgian and Armenian subjects. The new Byzantine Empire was steadily growing in the East, and Moscow was becoming the Third Rome. The Emperor and the Slavophiles saw dreams that the Cross might one day rest on the dome of St. Sophia in Constantinople.

But Nicolas at last overreached himself. In 1849 he marched his Cossacks into Hungary to put down a popular movement there, and the people of Western and Central Europe saw

the spectre of the Russian gendarme, with knout in hand, suppressing all freedom of thought and liberal movements in the name of the Holy Alliance. So when Nicolas demanded of the Sultan certain privileges for his Russian Church in the Holy Places of Palestine, the Western Powers, France and Britain, backed the Sultan's refusal and the Crimean War followed. The rest of Europe, including Prussia and Austria, though neutral, were hostile, and the Tsar had to keep his forces dispersed over a frontier from the Baltic to the Armenian highlands. Then a Franco-British force in the Crimea succeeded in taking Sebastopol and putting the Russian Black Sea fleet out of action. In this moment of anti-climax the Russian autocrat died and peace was made by his son Alexander. In that peace Russia was made to draw in her horns and give up her privileged position as the sole protector of the Balkan Slavs. She was not allowed to keep a fleet in the Black Sea, but she gained another strip of the Armenian plateau round Kars. The Slavophil idea had received a shock, but the Eastern Empire stood firm. Its greatest weakness remained internal.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For union of Russia with Georgia and annexations in Persia and Transcaucasus in 1810 and 1854 see Maps 2 and 3 (*at end*)

*Alexander II and the Era of Reforms*

WITH Alexander II there came to the throne a man who, though conservative by instinct, had the sense to realise that Russian society was in a highly critical condition and needed some drastic treatment. Yet action was difficult, for the whole set-up of Russian society was anomalous. During the eighteenth century the aristocracy had become largely Western-Europeanised in thought, while after the French Revolution liberal ideas had spread among all sections of the population, except among the most important—the peasants. Yet political power remained solely with the Emperor and with his bureaucracy. Meanwhile railways were being built and industry gradually developed. Yet serfdom bound the peasants to the soil and there was no free labour for factory work. A mediaeval political constitution thus hemmed in a people who were beginning to think for themselves, while an economic and social structure, based on serfdom, which had disappeared long ago from Western Europe, hampered industrial development. Russia was reaching the state that Great Britain was in during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when serfdom gradually disappeared before the new economic forces that eventually built up the Tudor monarchy and the English parliamentary system. But in Russia the middle classes were still so weak and the autocracy so strong that the change could not take place without considerable convulsions and at times disorder. This painful process, whereby Russia became a modern state, started on its last stage in the reign of Alexander II and was not finally completed till the great revolution of the twentieth century.

Alexander II saw that his father had failed to meet the demands of his day to make Russia a modern state, although he had made several half-hearted attempts to do so. The

Crimean War showed Russia's backward condition. So the new Emperor decided that at all costs the landed nobility must relinquish their rights to hold the peasants as serfs. Committees were set up to draw up plans for emancipation. The landowners were asked to prepare schemes for these committees. Here was a cause of much difficulty. The landlords fought hard for the right to obtain compensation for all their land after the peasants had acquired their legal freedom. It was obvious to the Emperor that if the solution was along these lines the last state of the peasants would be worse than the first, for, though free, they would become landless and wage serfs for anything that the landlords would be pleased to give them. So the Emperor secured that the peasants should receive allotments of land. But the landlords succeeded firstly in making the peasants pay heavily for these allotments and secondly in reducing them to quite inadequate proportions. In each district the landlords and peasants were left to come to agreement among themselves, and only when no agreement could be reached, did the Government committees, composed largely of landlords, intervene. Ultimately the peasants bought their cottages and gardens outright, but the latifundia outside the village were divided into two parts, namely allotments for the peasants and areas which the landlords retained as domain lands. For their share of the latifundia the peasants paid rent in money and in kind. State credit was offered to the peasants to enable them to buy their cottages and gardens, but many were far too poor to pay down the deposit in cash needed for this transaction. These remained economic dependants of the landlords and, though legally free, became temporarily bound by civil debts to their lord's holdings. Those who met their obligations formed themselves into new village communities and held their land on a system of periodical redistribution, so that each peasant should have a share of the good and bad lands. Thus the time-honoured Russian tradition of communal land-holding which had been a feature of Russian history from early times

survived the emancipation. But there appeared now in the village the poor peasant who had been unable to shake off the debt due to his landlord on emancipation. So class inequalities began to increase among the peasants and a landless proletariat began to appear. Most important of all the landlords fought hard to retain as much of the best land as possible, to reduce the peasant allotments and confine it to the poorest soil. In the North of Russia in the forests and swamps the peasants fared better, but in the black-earth lands of the Centre and South the peasants had to struggle hard for even meagre allotments. Moreover with the growth of population even adequate allocations of land became in time inadequate, and land-hunger became widespread even among those who had become independent of their former landlords. Only in the Cossack territories and in Siberia, where there never had been any landlords, did the Russian peasants become really free and independent and able to hold up their heads looking to the future. Thus emancipation did not solve the agrarian problem in Russia, and it was left to later popular movements to sweep away the remaining feudal relics and disabilities which still rested on the backs of the Russian peasants.

After emancipation, however, the whole system of local government and justice became profoundly altered, and in general for the better. The former serf-owner no longer had power to control local administration and courts of justice. Once more local councils based on occupation was the Russian way of development. Alexander II, true to Russian tradition, set up these councils called "Zemstvos," much along the lines of the plans drawn up by Speransky in the reign of Alexander I.<sup>1</sup> Now his nephew put into effect a part of Speransky's abortive plan. District Councils, or Zemstvos, were elected on an occupational franchise; landlords sent their representatives and peasant communities sent theirs. The landlords of course had proportionately a greater representation. But though the nobility still had a

<sup>1</sup> See page 65.

powerful influence in local politics and administration, and even a prescriptive right to preside at all functions, its monopoly powers were broken. These district Zemstvos then elected representatives to go to a Zemstvo of the province, or "Gubernia," whose authority covered education, public health and roads, and who had power to levy local rates. These important developments in Alexander's reign denoted the next stage in the evolution of self-government of the Russian people. From village communes and the Zemsky Sobor in the Middle Ages to Zemstvos in the middle of the nineteenth century the path led straight on to the Soviets of the twentieth century. All through the method was to set up councils based on occupation and built up in pyramid shape based on the district and through the province to a national body. But Alexander II, like most of the liberal-minded Tsars, recoiled from the logical step of creating a national representative body at the centre. He would not go as far even as Ivan the Terrible or the early Romanoff Tsars when they summoned the Zemsky Sobor. In those days such a body would have remained consultative, but now since the French Revolution it might seek to become paramount in the state, and even ultimately challenge the authority of the Emperor. So Alexander's reforms stopped half way. But he had opened the floodgates and the torrent was soon rushing through.

It was a tragedy for Russia that the emancipation of the peasants and the reforms which followed coincided with a wave of disillusionment and an upsurge of doctrines based on misinterpreted scientific materialism. If Peter the Great had let in Western ideas and given a jolt to Russian isolationism, hardly less was the effect of what came now to Russia from the West. For the reforms came late, and a section at least of the new middle classes and intellectuals, so long chafing under the dead hand of the autocracy, had become unresponsive and cynical. These people were the antithesis of the Slavophiles and of those idealists who believed in the

mystic Eastern culture of Russia. Like Peter the Great, they wanted imitation of the West. Darwin's theories and the discoveries of science found a ready response from these Russian intellectuals who passionately believed that only by material improvement and mastery of matter would Russia awake and become a modern state. They rejected all religion, moral conventions and the existing order absolutely, and with these went, of course, Alexander's reforms which they regarded as especially dangerous as leading the people away from their real means of salvation. Thus arose the school of the Nihilists who rejected all reform and aimed by terrorism to sweep the whole basis of the old society away and build a new one on its ruins. So Alexander found that his Liberalism had not only found no response in these quarters, but that he was faced with something which threatened the whole system of which he was the head, and even his personal existence.

The revolutionary movement in Russia was thus beginning to take definite shape. Up till now it had been confined to sporadic peasant and Cossack revolts. But now theories of society began to inspire the leaders and organisations to give it effectiveness. Not unnaturally the advocates of the new Russia, unwittingly perhaps, proved themselves to be good Russians as well as good revolutionaries. For they soon began to divide into groups which roughly corresponded to the two great schools of thought that had run down through Russian history. The Nihilists represented the school of those who wished slavishly to imitate the West. But there also grew up another group which could be represented as the modern revolutionary form of the Eastern school. It did not idealise the Slav people as such, or hold them up as a pattern to the rest of the world, but they did idealise the Russian peasant, and their ideas did coincide with those of the Slavophiles in their desire to base the new society on peasant communities rather than on science and urban industry. Like the Slavophil Eastern school before them, their programme was very vague. Their founder, A. I. Herzen, and the numerous university



students who followed him felt keenly the backward condition of the peasants, all the more so, since most of them had sprung from peasant stock themselves. They aimed first at educating the peasants, at going down to the villages and living like peasants themselves. The latter, however, generally failed to understand their self-appointed improvers and sometimes in fact handed them over to the Tsar's police. Thus gradually disillusionment grew in their ranks, and some of this school of revolutionaries founded the Land and Liberty League. This League adopted the same tactics as the Western materialist school of Nihilists and began to organise acts of terror and assassination against the officials of the Tsar. The revolutionary movement in fact was in its crude stages and soon fell a victim to repression. Later the Land and Liberty League was revised in a less militant form under the name of Narodniks.

Meanwhile another large section of the middle classes was developing in quite another way. They were enjoying the increasing fruits of trade and industry and accumulating wealth, now that emancipation had created a large labour market to exploit. From this quarter there arose the cry for the repression of the new revolutionaries and the Emperor and his bureaucracy acquired a new pillar of support. The spokesman of these elements of the middle class was a publicist, called Katkoff, who idealised Russian nationalism and middle-class conservatism. So once more an unhealthy alignment of forces arose in Russia. The autocracy, toying with Liberalism, recoiled into reaction and received the support of the middle classes, which in other European states at this period of history was on the side of social progress. The timing of the changes of Russian society seemed always to be wrong. Through long delay forces rejecting all compromise arose and drove the moderate reformer into the camp of reaction.

In the midst of the turmoil that followed Alexander's reforms something occurred which outwardly at least united

the Russian people—the conquest of Turkistan and the 1877 war with Turkey. On this issue, at least, many otherwise conflicting views could come together. The patriotic middle classes engaged in industry saw a chance of new markets in Central Asia. The Slavophiles and those who idealised the Russian peasant naturally wanted to help in emancipating the Slav peasants of the Balkans from the Turk. The bureaucracy wanted war in the hopes of sidetracking the revolutionary movement and securing increased administrative posts in the East. Even the Nihilists had no particular objection, hoping that an unsuccessful war would enable them to sweep the Tsar's régime away.

So the Eastern campaigns of the seventies found Slavophiles and Westerners united, though for different reasons. From 1868 to 1881 the Russian armies advancing from Siberia on the north and from the Orenburg steppes on the north-west closed in on the independent Khanates of Kokand, Khiva and Bokhara.<sup>1</sup> Tribes of Kirghiz and Turcomans who were subjects of these khans had been constantly raiding Cossack territories on the south Urals since the time of Ivan the Terrible. They were the last dying spasms of the Tartar invasions. The new Russian campaign put an end to this and joined to the Russian Empire many millions of new Mahomedan subjects. Again in keeping with the tradition of Russia from the earliest times, these non-Russian subjects of the Tsar were accorded the same rights as the Slav subjects. Indeed, they were privileged over the Russians because they were exempted from military service and yet received the material benefits that came with absorption by a state in some contact with the rest of Europe.

Somewhat earlier than this the mountain tribes of the Caucasus were brought under control in a campaign which ended in the capture of the great tribal leader and religious chief, Shamyl Bey. But a much more serious task awaited the Russian armies when in response to the cry of the Balkan

<sup>1</sup> For expansion in Central Asia see Maps 2 and 3 (*at end*).

Slavs after the Bulgarian atrocities the Emperor marched his armies across the Danube and invaded the Balkans. For months the Russians were held up on the Shipka Pass and before Plevna, but at last the Turkish resistance was broken and the Russian armies stood before Constantinople. Then followed a tense moment when the British fleet entered the Sea of Marmora and stood ready to defend the Sultan. The fear of Russian Imperialism advancing across the roadways to India aroused the London Cabinet of Mr. Disraeli. Anglo-Russian relations worsened again and the peace settlement of Berlin which robbed Russia of some of her gains in the Balkans, though it confirmed her conquests in the Caucasus,<sup>1</sup> was followed by a period of continual Anglo-Russian tension. The disillusionment felt by all classes in Russia at the only partial success of the Turkish campaign reacted against the Emperor. The Nihilists saw their chance and on a cold March day in 1881 Alexander II was cruelly mutilated by a Nihilist bomb, while driving along one of St. Petersburg's canals. Thus perished a man who had bravely faced the almost impossible task of removing by peaceful means the obstacles which geography, history and human frailty had placed in the way of modernising Russian society.

<sup>1</sup> See Map 3 (*at end*) for annexations in 1877 and 1878.

*The Last Years of the Romanoffs*

As before in Russian history, the character of the new Tsar, Alexander III, was no inconsiderable factor in determining the course of Russian affairs during the period of his reign. Strong-willed, conservative but peaceful, he was determined to uphold the autocracy at home, to use the landed nobility for his purposes and to maintain peace abroad. But he would hardly have succeeded if there had not been an economic basis for his rule and a general desire for more quiet times after the hectic reign of his father. The industrial possibilities opened up by the emancipation of the serfs was a great incentive for a section of the people to eschew revolutionary activities and try to find in the exploitation of Russia's vast resources a possible way out. The unbalanced Russian state with one element of its society clinging fast to autocracy and to the remnants of agrarian feudalism, another seeking for a new heaven on earth and a third largely indifferent to either might, it was felt, benefit by a decade or two of quiet economic development and become better balanced in the process. This was the position of Russia during the eighties.

Alexander III, however, laid the seeds of future trouble when he decided to emasculate as much as he could of his father's agrarian and local government reforms. While he sought to alleviate the lot of peasants whose land allotments were insufficient after emancipation, by the offer of free land in Siberia and Central Asia, he did little to improve matters in Central Russia. On the contrary, he reduced the powers of the Zemstvos and set up in each rural area a "land captain" ("Zemsky Nachalnik") who, as a nominee of the bureaucracy, had the task of largely replacing the Zemstvos both in their judicial and their local administrative work. Thus the government of the country became increasingly centralised and divorced from the people.

On the other hand Alexander III initiated during his reign for the first time on a systematic scale a strong Russian nationalist policy in home affairs. This was aimed at suppressing as far as possible the small Christian nationalities of the Empire who had some cultural or linguistic difference from the Great Russians or who were not members of the Orthodox Church. The Moslems of course were left severely alone but the Ukrainians, Finns, Poles and the Caucasian peoples were subjected to a policy of russification. This was something quite new in Russian history, for it ran quite contrary to the whole Byzantine tradition of racial tolerance which has hitherto been faithfully followed by former rulers. But there is little doubt that the influences which prompted Alexander to act along these lines were largely foreign, particularly German. The evil influence of the Prussian Court and especially of Bismarck made itself felt in Court circles in St. Petersburg at this time, and was reflected in the policy of the Tsar's bureaucracy. It was notorious during these times that the Prussian and the Russian police co-operated in the policy of suppressing all manifestations of national feeling among the Poles, and both Courts agreed on a common policy to maintain at all costs the infamous partition of that unhappy country. So with the Ukrainians and the Finns the sinister theory of racial supremacy, completely alien to all Russian history hitherto, began slowly to creep in. Germans from the Baltic provinces secured high positions in the St. Petersburg bureaucracy and influenced policy along these lines. German influence had been allowed to come in in Peter the Great's day, but it had never affected the attitude of the Government on racial and national issues.

But Alexander seems to have been aware that German influence over Russia must not be allowed to go beyond a certain point, so while he permitted it in home affairs, he secured himself abroad by an alliance with one of the Western democracies, the French Republic. The headstrong policy of William II had eliminated Bismarck, who stood firm by the tradition of the Holy Alliance of autocrats to suppress liberal

movements. The young Emperor was no friend of the latter either, but he thought he could treat Alexander as a poor relation and failed to see that a strong national feeling was developing in Russia, which was more actively concerned with the defence of Russia throughout all Europe, and not only in the East, as the Slavophiles had been up to now. And so an anomalous situation was created by a marriage of convenience. The Russian autocrat allied himself with a democratic Republic in order to ensure himself against the too great influence over him of a neighbouring autocrat. As a result, Russia's international affairs became as complex and unbalanced as her internal affairs.

This, too, was the position when Alexander III's son, Nicholas II, ascended the throne in 1894. Just before his father's death there was a disastrous famine in certain of the provinces. This revealed a grave state of affairs in the agrarian system of Russia. The reforms of Alexander II were not sufficient to deal with the trouble of land hunger and poverty in the villages, but the reactionary home policy of Alexander III had now whittled away many even of these meagre reforms. Heavy landlord's dues, insufficient allotments of land and low standard of agriculture generally spelt famine in those vast spaces of Russia where weather conditions in any year reduced the crops. It had been hoped that the growth of industry following emancipation would cause wealth to circulate. But here again it was found that the landless peasant who had sold his allotment and gone to the towns had become a low wage earner without any right of combination to protect his economic interest. Thus, though wealth was accumulating among a section of the middle classes, poverty both in town and country was increasing. The new provincial government organs, the Zemstvos, were anxious to meet the need of the times by starting welfare schemes and social services. But Nicolas II maintained the reactionary policy of his father, restricted the power of the Zemstvos and ruled the country by his centralised bureaucracy, the secret police and the "zemsky nachalniki." And so among

the growing working class population of the towns there began to appear a new revolutionary movement. Marxist socialism began to get a foothold among this element of the working class of Russia. This movement was Western European in origin, was based on a materialist philosophy of history, and aimed by revolutionary methods at bringing Russia into line with the rest of Europe. The young and awakening urban workers of Russia were turning to the West for their political theories and putting up an alternative to the agrarian philosophy of the "Narodniks"<sup>1</sup> with their particular appeal to the Russian peasants only.

It was in this critical situation in the opening years of this century that the Government of Nicolas II, with amazing irresponsibility, decided to go to war with Japan. Nothing showed the decay of the Tsarist system more than this episode. For this war was entirely different to any that Russia had ever been engaged in before. It could definitely be described as an Imperialist war of aggression. The wars which Russia had in the past fought with Turkey and the Central Asian states had been waged in order to secure the Eastern frontiers of Russia for her peasant colonists: those with Sweden and Lithuania to secure an opening on the sea to the West to enable Russia to develop her trade with Europe under her own control. But there had grown up in the last half of the nineteenth century in Russia a bureaucratic class which had interests in expansion for its own sake and grand ducal families which had acquired estates in the Far East. The ruling classes of Russia had ceased to show even a paternal care for the Russian peasant, which they had undoubtedly done in the past, especially during the reigns of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Catharine II, and were engaged now in using Russian military power to advance their own financial interests and authority. In former centuries the peasants had been oppressed by the landed nobility, while the Tsars had on the whole protected the peasants, and their foreign policy and wars had had the security of the

<sup>1</sup> See page 179.

agrarian communities and the general economic interests of Russia in mind. But now the Cross of Orthodox Christianity assumed more a political than a religious significance, and the placing of the cross on St. Sophia in Constantinople was becoming the means of advancing the claims of a Tsarist bureaucracy and grand ducal families to places of emolument at the expense of neighbouring Eastern states. In regard to the clash between Russia and Japan in 1904-5, Hohenzollern Germany was not without responsibility in aiding and abetting the aggression. Since the closing years of the nineteenth century Germany had started out on the road of Imperial expansion. The Eastern school of politics in Germany had advocated two lines of advance; one by peaceful penetration of Russia, by influencing the Tsar's Court to suppress all liberal movements in Russia and to allow for Germany economic concessions throughout the Tsar's dominions to exclusion of other countries. The other line of expansion for Germany lay through the Balkans and Turkey to the Persian Gulf. An example of this was the Bagdad Railway concession which opened up the Near and Middle East to peaceful penetration. This and the policy of penetration of Russia itself involved for Germany two things: first that Russian expansion southward towards the Balkans and Turkey should cease and second, and as a consequence of the first, that Russian Imperialism should confine its activities to the further parts of Asia, where German Imperialism had as yet no direct interest. Hence William Hohenzollern of Prussia in the early years of twentieth century was concerned in assisting Nicolas II to suppress popular movements in Russia which might endanger a brother autocrat, while he encouraged Russian expansion in the Far East, even though it meant an almost certain conflict with Japan.

The result of this policy was not altogether what was desired by the Imperial plotters. Russia's defeat in the war with Japan led to the first serious and organised revolutionary movement that had till then occurred in Russian history. During the last weeks of 1905 when the war with Japan was ending



in defeat, revolts and risings broke out all over Russia, in the army and navy and in the towns and villages. An organised revolutionary body known as a Soviet or Council of work-people from the St. Petersburg factories was formed to lead a general strike to demand constitutional changes. This body was typical of what the Russian people had always created in times of stress—a council based on occupation, claiming political power. Workmen of the capital acted as factory units rather than as electors for an area of St. Petersburg. While the sporadic and unorganised outbreaks in the rest of the country produced no concrete result, the action of the St. Petersburg Soviet crystallised the movement in the rest of the country. But the leaders of the revolutionary movement were not united. Some thought that the Soviet should assume political power and replace the Tsar's government. Others thought that they should at this stage go no further than demanding from the Government a constitution and a popular assembly.

It was clear that in spite of the efforts of the Prussian and Russian autocrats to stifle them, democratic ideas from England and France had been making headway in Russia. The Russian intellectuals and professional classes had for some years been travelling in Europe, and the ideas of parliamentary government with a representative assembly based on a wide franchise of all citizens, voting in their places of residence rather than in their places of work, was becoming widespread among this section of the public and even among the urban workers. So as a result of a general strike and of the activities of the St. Petersburg Soviet the Government of the Tsar in a manifesto on October 1905 set up an electoral system which was to all intents and purposes adult suffrage on the model of a Western democracy. This was, however, very different from anything that Russia had ever experienced before. The First Duma or Parliament which met in May 1906 was in essence similar to the French Chamber or the British House of Commons. Nothing like it had been seen before in Russia on a national scale. The Zemsky Sobor had been a conference

of councils based on delegates from certain important and influential occupations. But the Duma was a Parliament based on geographical constituencies in a country stretching from the Vistula to the Pacific and from the Arctic Circle to the Caucasus. This gigantic expanse of constituencies might not in itself have made parliamentary government unworkable. The trouble was that within the constituencies there was no real social cohesion nor a common purpose among the various classes and occupations. Russia was in the throes of a conflict between workers and factory owners, between peasant and landlord, while nationalist movements were running strong among the smaller people of the Empire. Russia had jumped too suddenly into a parliamentary democracy without any preparatory education in the working of so delicate a mechanism, and without that spirit of compromise which alone could make it work.

In the First Duma the Cadet Party assumed the leadership. This was a party of liberal constitutionalists who had drunk deep in the waters of Western democracy. The Tsar's Government, however, was able after its first fright to assemble round itself sufficient Cossacks and units of the Imperial army and all elements in the country that had vested interests in reaction. After a stormy career the First Duma was dissolved and a Second Duma, which was elected and met in February 1907, in spite of attempts by the police to tamper with the elections also produced a radical progressive majority. But the Tsar and his bureaucracy, determined to smash not only the revolutionary Soviets, but also the organs of evolutionary democracy which the activities of the Soviets had largely brought into existence, now decided to dissolve the Second Duma also. Fresh elections were held again, but this time the electoral law was altered. Under the new method of election the Duma ceased to be a democratic assembly and became something more nearly resembling the old Zemsky Sobor, at least in so far as a functional system of representation was introduced. The difference was, however, that whereas the old Zemsky Sobor did represent all classes except

the peasants, the Third Duma was a hybrid institution which had its representation arbitrarily tilted in favour of the propertied classes and landowners. Thus most of the towns were merged into rural areas, where workers votes would be swamped by peasants, and special electoral colleges were set up, so that peasants could only vote for candidates specially selected by the authorities from among the landed nobility. In fact the Third Duma was to some extent a Zemsky Sobor of the landed nobility and of the new-rich among the middle classes. But fortunately a party known as the Octobrists secured also important representation in this Duma. They took their name from the date of the constitutional reforms which the Tsar granted and on which the First Duma was elected. They represented the people of moderate liberal views among the smaller landed gentry and commercial middle classes, and their training ground had been the provincial Zemstvos, that creation of the Tsar Emancipator. In actual fact the Zemstvos were more representative of the Russian people than the Duma ever was. Based on the village communes of the peasants and the professional unions of the provincial towns they were in direct succession to the local bodies which in previous centuries had built up the Zemsky Sobor. And fortunately through the Octobrists the Zemstvos were able to exert some influence on the otherwise reactionary Third Duma. In fact from the end of 1907 till 1912 the Octobrists held the balance in the Third Duma, playing off one party against another and utilising their position to extract concessions from the Tsar's Prime Minister, M. Stolypin. The latter in his turn balanced insecurely between the Duma on the one hand and his more reactionary bureaucratic colleagues, whom the Tsar insisted in having in the Government, on the other. In 1912 a Fourth Duma was elected of a very similar composition to the Third. And this Fourth Duma in spite of its restricted franchise continued to be the arena where the Russian Liberals learnt the art of parliamentary government, of criticising in debate, of winning concessions and negotiating reforms. Moreover, some

important agrarian changes were initiated during these times.

These changes were set on foot by the Prime Minister, M. Stolypin, who conceived the idea that the Russian peasant could be induced to become a pillar of the Tsar's Government and a bulwark against the revolutionary ideas of some of the urban workers. For some decades now the peasant had been legally free, but economically burdened by heavy dues to landlords, while his land allotments were in most areas too small. Above all the peasant still clung to his commune or "mir," and over large areas of Central Russia the primitive strip system of farming still continued. The village held the land in common and redistribution was undertaken every few years. The Russian peasant seemed wedded to the idea that the community holds the land in common, though each family might farm for itself. So Stolypin set himself the task of trying to break down the agelong instinct of the Russian peasant for communal ownership. He hoped to make him a peasant proprietor as in Western Europe and so a conservative element in the State. He induced the Duma to agree to a land reform scheme whereby every peasant would have the right to leave the village commune and claim his allotment of land as his own in perpetuity. Many of the Liberals in the Duma and the members of the Zemstvos in the provinces looked upon these agrarian changes with no small misgivings. For while they might pretend to create an independent peasantry in effect they would only aggravate the problem by creating a landless peasantry and by leading to further proletarianisation of the weaker elements of the village. It was felt that the reforms would lead to some peasants doing well and growing rich, while others who were less lucky and had poorer allotments would sink into poverty, and class antagonism would intensify rather than decrease. And that is precisely what did happen. In some parts of Russia, particularly in the Ukraine and the Western provinces peasants left the "mir" and became proprietors. In the struggle for the best allotments, however, the weaker went to the

wall. On the other hand in large parts of the Central provinces the old system of land-utilisation, went on and primitive methods of farming kept the peasants in a constant state of poverty. Undoubtedly the new peasant proprietors were able to improve their system of agriculture, while co-operative societies made their appearance and helped to set up those peasants who were fortunate enough to get a good start. But in the long run the Stolypin land reform created as many problems as it solved. Moreover, violence had been done to an old Russian tradition which had been practised for centuries by the ancient Slavs and, though reforms were clearly needed, this slavish imitation of Western Europe, while bringing some material benefits to a section, also brought further class dissension into Russian rural life.

Stolypin did not live long to see the results of his reforms. He was hated by the bigoted reactionaries round the Tsar's Court and he was finally murdered at Kieff under suspicious circumstances. The Government now became increasingly reactionary and quarrelled even with the conservative Duma. But a series of good harvests improved the economic condition of the country and foreign capital was coming into Russia in ever increasing quantities. This caused a temporary decline in revolutionary enthusiasm and encouraged the work of educating the enlightened small gentry and the middle and intellectual classes in the art of parliamentary government. For the first time in the history of Russia the Government of the Autocrat had to submit its estimates for the spending departments each year to the Duma, and had to reply to enquiry and scrutinisation. The Russian people were passing through a preparatory school to self-government, and it is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if these developments had been allowed to proceed. There is no doubt that during these years parliamentary government was on trial in Russia and, unsatisfactory as the electoral system of the Duma was, when judged from British and French standards, a beginning had been made in the art of

parliamentary debate and criticism of Government measures. If big events in the international sphere had not supervened to complicate the internal stability of Russia, it is impossible to say how far Western constitutional ideas might not have developed. For Russia was engaged at that time in one of her periodical phases of learning from the West.

But events were leading up to the World War of 1914-18. Austro-German Imperialism was driving down through the Balkans and Turkey to the Persian Gulf. In Russia a new form of Slavophil movement was running strong, and the Liberals, with large popular support, were backing the Balkan Slavs against both Turkey and Austria. The progressives of the Duma and of the provincial Zemstvos were strongly pro-British and pro-French and were ready for war with Germany. The reactionaries round the Tsar's Court on the other hand were pro-German and wanted peace at all costs. When the clash came in 1914 the Right were in the main against war, and, though many patriotically fell into line, the muddle and inefficiency which they caused in the army and in the Government machine lead to the serious defeats which Russia suffered in 1915. Added to this the fact that the pro-war Liberals were developing grand Imperial designs for the conquest of the Straits and expansion in the East, it is clear that Russia entered the war as a house divided against itself. The old Russian state based on autocracy and a landed nobility was now quite effete. Russia had been struggling to become a modern state with industry and an up-to-date army. But the old privileged castes stood in the way and the World War proved the testing period which finally broke them. The question remained if Western ideas of parliamentary government were sufficiently rooted in Russia as a result of this period from the 1905 revolution to 1914 to survive the strain of war; or whether some Russian native force, latent in the masses, crude and at first destructive but later creative, would not arise out of the fiery ordeal of war and take control.

*The Failure of the Russian Liberals*

THE World War (1914-18) proved the graveyard of the Romanoff dynasty which for nearly three hundred years had guided the destinies of Russia, at times not without success, out of the chaos of the "Time of Troubles" down to the twentieth century. In later years the despotic régime of the sovereign entrenched behind a bureaucracy which former Tsar's had created to support their rule, proved too rigid and unresponsive to new methods to enable it to win a modern war. The landed nobility, though far less powerful than in former days, too often monopolised positions in the services for which they were unfitted, while the commercial middle classes, so strong in Western Europe, were unable in Russia effectively to compete for political power in the State. The Liberals, however, of the Zemstvos jumped into the breach and organised war work in the rear of the armies, doing largely what the Government failed to do. But the latter perceiving the political influence which might accrue to the Liberal and democratic movement in Russia as a result of the activities of the Zemstvos, obstructed and hindered them at every turn. The Court came more and more under the influence of a superstitious Empress, a weak Tsar and a disolute monk, till even the parties of the Right in a Conservative Duma despaired for the régime. Finally the military defeats on the fronts and the economic and transport chaos in the rear set a seal on the dynasty, and amid general rejoicing the last Romanoff abdicated in March 1917, and a Provisional Government was formed based on the Left and Centre parties of the Duma.

Here then was the one chance which might have come to Russia to follow the footsteps of Western democracy, elect a Constituent Assembly on a broad franchise and establish

the personal liberty of the citizen. But the reason why the Kerensky régime, as it was later called, failed may be attributed to various causes. It might be thought that if the World War had not been in progress or, if Russia could have peacefully retired from the struggle, a parliamentary régime on the Anglo-Saxon model would have taken root in Russia. It is conceivable that if there had been no war during these years such a development might have taken place. But the existence in Russia of a weak and rigid autocracy, a Slavophil Imperialism among the Liberals and a generally unbalanced social structure in which old and new forms stood side by side, had been by its very existence a standing invitation to Austro-German Imperialism to engage in adventures in the East, and had resulted finally in 1914 in the clash of arms. So the question of what might have happened in Russia if there had been no war is largely academic. What seems certain is that two factors gravely weighted the scales against the Kerensky provisional régime and the prospects of a parliamentary Republic springing up in Russia after the fall of the Romanoffs. One was the breakdown of the administration under the strain of war; the other was the absence of a common purpose uniting all Russian citizens, a spirit of tolerance and compromise, sufficient to enable all shades of opinion and all economic groups to get together in a national parliament to thrash out the internal problems facing Russia. An assembly representing all classes at that critical time in 1917 would not have been able to function without a public opinion long educated in the art of self-government. That did not exist. The Russian people had since Peter the Great's day played no continuous part in the management of their own affairs, and not much even before then. They had only been called in from time to time in an advisory capacity in bodies like the Zemsky Sobor, representing various classes and occupations. For over a century these advisory bodies had represented mainly the landed nobility and commercial classes, while the great masses of the peasants and workers



of the towns had been virtually excluded even from those advisory bodies. In recent years the Zemstvos had in certain provinces provided direct representation for the peasants, although in others this had been forthcoming only indirectly, through the more liberal elements of the landed gentry. This plant was, then, of too tender a growth to withstand much hard weather. The only really popular representative body in Russia was the village commune or "mir," and that had no power but existed to protect its members from the exaction of landlords and the tyranny of local police officials. If an all-embracing national assembly was to be formed with any hope of success, it was first necessary to have an atmosphere of peace and calm in the country and a willingness of landlord, peasant, urban merchant and industrial leader, town worker and professional man to sink their own feelings in a common effort. The continuation of the war and the lack of any education in self-government in the past made a breakdown of the Kerensky provisional government inevitable.

For by the summer of 1917 the pent-up feelings of the masses were rising from below in a mighty eruption. Two great forces were set in motion by the dynamics of Russian society and history. First there were the industrial workers, who, though they did not number at this time in Russia more than from 3,000,000 to 4,000,000, nevertheless wielded a force out of all proportion to their numbers, holding key positions in the industries in the Petrograd region, in the Eastern Ukraine, in the Upper Volga and Moscow regions, and in the mining areas of the Don and Urals. For decades grossly exploited, often by absentee foreign capital, and deprived of the right of combination, these people were in no mood to listen to advice from the Liberals of the Provisional Government to await reports of commissions of inquiry. They wanted results at once, and they began already in the summer of 1917 to set up factory committees to control the management and improve their material conditions. By the side of the Provisional Government they set up a chain

of factory committees, or industrial Soviets, all over Russia, and these began to get together and hold conferences which adopted political slogans inspired by the Bolshevik wing of the Marxist workers' party. The second elemental force welling up from below came from the villages, where the peasant communes had been organising to elect delegates to provincial conferences which then began to send representatives to national congresses in Petrograd and Moscow to discuss rural problems. And only one one thing at this time interested the peasants, namely to remove the last relics of feudalism left after the reforms of Alexander II. Land hunger was the peasants' main trouble. The population of the Central provinces was growing fast, and the land allotments provided in 1862 were now quite inadequate. Where Stolypin's reforms had set up peasant proprietary holdings the village was divided against itself, some peasants sticking to the commune against those who had left it. Almost everywhere the landlords' latifundia, which the peasants had worked for many years past for the payment of heavy dues, were appropriated by direct action, the payment of dues ceased and peasant committees got to work on the spot, even against the wishes of the Provisional Government, to apportion the land among the existing holdings. The agrarian revolution, in fact, was in full swing in the summer of 1917 in spite of the protests of the Liberals of the Kerensky régime who begged the peasants to await the reports of investigating committees. But the peasants no less than the urban workers had no faith in parliamentary commissions. Over the vast spaces of Russia there was an elemental uprising of the Slav soul, seeking new forms of expression. The spirit of Alexander Nefsky, of Dmitry Donskoy, of Prince Pozharsky, of Stenka Razin and of Pugachef was abroad in the land. The Russian people were working out their own salvation once the unsuccessful war had caused the foundations of the old régime to break. And they naturally sought to express themselves through those forms which they had been used to in the past. Just as the

Volga bargemen had banded together in "artels" far back in Russian history, so the metal worker of Petrograd and the textile worker of the Upper Volga formed factory committees and the peasants of Samara formed councils based on their century-old village "mir." So councils, or Soviets, based on industry and occupation sprang up everywhere, from the Gulf of Finland to the oases of Central Asia and the steppes of the Tartars, and one by one they sent their delegates to Petrograd to consult and seek advice on what to do in their localities. A new twentieth century Zemsky Sobor came into existence. But no Tsar had summoned them. The Liberals of the Provisional Government were too steeped in the ideas of Western democracy to understand what was going on in their own country. Never were intellectuals so completely divorced from the real instincts and aspirations of their fellow citizens. Never was the gap between the Russian Liberals and the masses so wide as now. It was indeed a great tragedy, but the young and promising Liberal movement, based on Western ideas, had been born in too turbulent a world to survive. The popular wave surged past it and left it stranded on a desert island, forgotten and only to be recorded as a brief episode in the pages of Russian history.

It was because one man had appreciated what was going on in Russia during these months since the abdication of Nicolas II, had realised the need to harness the elemental upsurgings of the Russian spirit to constructive effort, that ~~he~~ rather than the intellectual Liberals of the Kerensky régime found himself at the head of the new Russia which arose out of the October Revolution of 1917. That man was Lenin. He performed the functions of the Tsars of past centuries when they summoned in times of difficulty the Zemsky Sobors to advise on the government of Russia. The only difference was that the new Zemsky Sobor was called the All-Russia Soviet Congress, and Lenin and his colleagues of the Bolshevik party not only sought its advice but used it to educate the Russian masses, played on it, managed it, like

enlightened party "bosses." And there was this difference, too, between the old and the new Zemsky Sobor; whereas the old one was overweighted with the representatives of the landowning nobility and clergy, the new one excluded just these classes and consisted of only peasants, workers and rank and file soldiers and sailors. The occupational representation had changed owing to the shift of economic power from the landowning class to the peasants and workers which had been gradually going on all through the long period of unstable society in the last Romanoff reigns. The Soviets thus became the direct lineal descendants of the Zemsky Sobor, but they had some affinities with the more recent Zemstvos, insofar as these had in part at least and imperfectly, represented peasant communities on a provincial basis. The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 was, in one of its aspects, the consummation of the century-old struggle of the Russian peasant for the economic liberty which had once been his in early Russia, but of which he had been robbed by Tartar invasions and the encroachments of a feudal landlordism. The other aspect was the industrial workers' movement, which in fact formed the backbone of the great revolt. And the instrument which the masses used was the conference of councils based on industry and land occupation. These bodies took control, and the Constituent Assembly, which should have succeeded the Duma as a parliament elected on a geographical basis of constituencies, faded out. It was too clumsy a device for a country on the eve of social revolution. The Soviets were the instruments ready to hand, for they sprang up spontaneously in factory and village throughout the vast expanses of Russia. They were the forms which the Russian people had created in this hour of trial to save themselves, as they had done many times before in their history.

So, on the night of November 7, 1917, the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee acted. Lenin, who had for some months been in hiding, persuaded his colleagues on the Central

Committee of the Bolshevik Party that now was the time to strike. The industrial workers of Northern Russia were ready. They wanted social revolution. The peasants of Central Russia were land hungry and wanted to get rid of landlords in order to increase their communal holdings. They might later develop a hostility to the socialist experiments of the industrial workers, but for the moment they were both together. Lenin saw that a successful *coup* carried out by the workers and peasants would give the former the real power in the state and enable them to lead the peasants. If power was not seized now, these two might drift apart, anarchy would reign and reaction would return. It was Lenin's genius to see this and persuade his hesitant and sceptical colleagues that the time had come to act. All the other Bolshevik leaders were afraid. Even Trotsky, who had started a little sect of his own, could not make up his mind. But finally a decision was taken and Lenin's view prevailed. Then Lenin and Trotsky took the lead together, Lenin as the brain power and chief director and Trotsky as the chief orator and military leader. In those critical days it was those two men, working for a time perfectly in harness, who took control over the destiny of Russia.

*The Soviets Take Control*

THE Congress of the All-Russia Soviets in the early days of the October Revolution really had little to do at first but to confirm the changes that had been taking place before Lenin seized power and while the Kerensky Government was still in existence. All traces of the feudal past were now swept away, and the peasants came into undisputed possession of the lands on which they had formerly paid dues in money and kind. The task of the Soviet Congress was to try and hammer out a policy for land utilisation and agriculture. On this, however, difficulties soon developed. In some regions peasant proprietorship had grown since Stolypin's reforms and the Russian peasant, more particularly in the Ukraine and the Western provinces, had developed a more personal possessive interest in the land. Here the division of the landlords' latifundia meant a general scramble to add to the existing private holdings as much as possible. In other parts of Russia, in the North and Centre, the old Russian tradition of common land utilisation was still strong. The village "mir" functioned here, and so the result generally was that the land, periodically divided up among the peasants, was increased by the addition of the latifundia. The Soviet Congress tried to lay down a uniform policy for land utilisation in all districts but found this hard. The Russian peasants were passing through one of their periods of anarchical outbreaks during which robbery and at times bloodshed was indulged in as a result of pent-up forces breaking loose. The Soviet leaders tried to canalise this energy and organise the agrarian revolt, but for a long time it was too strong for them. The Soviet authorities wanted to save the landlords' domain farms, where the standard of agriculture was high, as state and experimental farms, but they were in most cases unable to

prevent the peasants from burning down the buildings and slaughtering the cattle. It was very similar to what had happened during the "Time of Troubles," or later under the Cossacks and Pugachef.

In industry, too, the Soviets had at first only to register the change that had taken place during 1917. Workers committees in the principal factories throughout Russia had taken control and were running the works as far as they could themselves, or with the management under close watch. Output fell rapidly and an attitude not far removed from Syndicalism developed where the workers began to treat the factories as their own private property. The Soviet leaders struggled against this, too, and tried to organise industry on a national basis in state trusts, with managers responsible to the Centre and workers control confined to working conditions and prevention of sabotage. These ideas, however, were slow in taking root and a long chaotic period supervened. One of the greatest difficulties which the Bolshevik party had to deal with during this period was the anarchistic and extreme Left tendencies of the peasants and workers. This often expressed itself in individual possessiveness under the cover of high-sounding revolutionary phrases. These elemental anarchist instincts had been fostered by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party which had originally arisen out of the "Narodniks" and the Land and Liberty group in the reign of Alexander II.<sup>1</sup> During the 'nineties of last century there had grown up among the factory workers of North Russia Socialist ideas of the Marxist school. The Russian Social-Democratic Workman's Party had grown in the industrial centres of Russia since the beginning of the century. It had split into two sections. One, the Mensheviks, thought that after the fall of Tsarism, Russia must pass through a phase of capitalist middle-class government with a parliamentary system in which the working classes would gradually get power by constitutional means. The other

<sup>1</sup> See page 79.

section, the Bolsheviks, thought that the opportunity must be taken of the fall of Tsarism to eliminate the period of middle class capitalism and lay the foundations of the full Socialist State by the forcible seizure of power at once. Both sections believed in the materialist conception of history and in the Marxian dialectic of successive economic systems dissolving one another. So when the Bolshevik Party, under Lenin's guidance, seized power in October 1917, their revolutionary Marxist ideas became the dominant one inspiring the policy of the new Soviets. Economic determinism and revolutionary socialism became the new secular state religion of Russia, and Western European science and industry, with private ownership abolished, became the model they set up to work on. Lenin in fact became the twentieth century Peter the Great, introducing wholesale the Marxian socialist philosophy from Western Europe and aiming to build up Russia into a great industrial state with the aid of science and technical knowledge copied from Europe. Like Peter, Lenin was in a hurry. He saw the tragic backwardness of Russia, and he was concerned that she should organise and strengthen herself before predatory Western capitalism got in first and organised Russia by exploiting her people. In this way, at least, Lenin followed the line of the Western school of Russian statesmen who in times past had been impressed by the weakness of Russia and had aimed at introducing Western ideas and methods. But in another way Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were not just Western imitators. They saw also Russia, emancipated from the West, rejuvenated and waking from an age-long sleep of social reaction and obscurantism, as the first Great Power to adopt the Socialist form of society. Though the slogans of their movement were international, the practical effect of their success was national and resulted in uniting the Eastern Slavs of Russia with the non-Russian people, the sister races of Tartars, Caucasians, and Central Asian Moslems in a common social revolutionary effort. But the next phase of the Revolution was characterised by the



opening of a great international crusade. The fiery cross of revolutionary socialism must be carried throughout the world, and Russia must lead off in carrying it. World Revolution, starting in Russia, must spread through all lands. Russia adopting ideas from the West would give them back to the West and so to all the world. There is a certain similarity to be seen here with the Slavophiles, but whereas the Slavophiles revolted against the ideas of the West, the Bolsheviks went to the West for their ideas. But they resembled the Slavophiles in so far as they gave them a Russian interpretation, as in their day the Kievan Russians had put their interpretation on Greek Christianity. The Slavophiles assigned to Russia the leadership of the Slavs in Eastern Europe. The Bolsheviks assigned to her the leadership of the movement to regenerate the whole world and lead it to a new life, where exploitation would be abolished and social equality and prosperity would reign. Thus one sees that after the October Revolution Russia entered into one of those periods which she had experienced in her history before, when she saw herself with a Messianic mission to perform to save all humanity. What a complete contrast this was to the doctrine which from time to time has come to the fore in modern Germany, and which aims also at world leadership for Germans but only as a dominating superior race. But the Russian soul is wedded to an all-embracing humanism. It seeks to convert humanity, never to dominate it.

Thus the Revolution confirmed and continued the policy of racial toleration which had been practised under the Tsars, with the exception of the short period when German influence was strong at the Russian Court. The tradition of the Byzantine Empire was passed on to the Bolsheviks. The subject races of the Tsar may have had few liberties, but such as they were, they were shared equally between Christian and Moslem and between Slav and Tartar. In the Soviet Republic, which later blossomed into the U.S.S.R., the industrial workers and peasants became the chief beneficiaries of the change.

Increased land allotments and the abolition of feudal dues for the peasants, the setting up of workers' control in the factories were benefits which no Tsar could bestow on his people, and they were now shared equally between all races of the Republic.

The Tsar's Government latterly failed in its handling of national problems within the Empire, but this was not due to any calculated policy of racial hegemony of the German type. The suppression of the liberties of the Poles was largely due to the sinister influence of Germany on Russian Government circles. This anti-Polish policy had been initiated by the evil genius of Bismarck, whose diplomatic machine was for years set in motion against all attempts in Russia and Austria to adopt a more Liberal attitude towards the Poles. In Finland the people had enjoyed, since the time of Alexander I, their own laws and constitution. After the 1906 revolution the Tsarist bureaucracy started undermining Finnish liberties. But this was not a racial action directed solely against the Finns. It was part of a general policy of suppressing the political liberties of all the subjects of the Empire and was directed as much against the Russians as against non-Russians. Again the Tsar's Government often failed to keep the peace between the races of the Caucasus, and feuds between Armenians, Georgians and Tartars often broke out in bloody pogroms. The Government's policy was not one of general repression against the people of the Caucasus. It was part of a policy of fighting against all reforms and constitutional changes throughout the whole Empire. In the Caucasus it was found easier to attain this end by inflaming racial feeling and inciting Georgians and Tartars against Armenians. This was in fact a symptom that the Government was losing its grip on the Empire and, being in a state of decadence, was using these means to retain its class and not racial hegemony. The anti-Semitic policy of the last two Romanoff Tsars was characterised by the creation of a Jewish Pale in South-West Russia. It, too, was an entirely new departure in home affairs,

was unknown in previous reigns and was clearly an indication of the desire of the régime to retain power by a policy of "divide and rule."

The October Revolution not only reaffirmed the racial tolerance of former régimes but by decentralising that part of Government administration which deals with local affairs, and particularly with cultural matters, education and languages, gave an outlet to the national feelings of the non-Russian races to express themselves in a harmless way. Thus the racial feuds among the people of the Caucasus disappeared within a very short time after the Bolsheviks took power, while all important matters of state affecting the economy, defence and transport of the U.S.S.R. remained concentrated in Moscow. But once local cultural autonomy was granted by the Soviet Government and the federal republics started in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tadjikistan and Khirghizistan, these non-Russian nationalities did not object to the retention of essential national services by the Central Soviet Government. Thus the U.S.S.R. adopted and expanded in twentieth century surroundings, with satisfactory results, the Byzantine tradition of racial tolerance.<sup>1</sup>

The new régime, however, was faced with many grave problems in its relations with foreign powers. The declaration of the doctrine of World Revolution, to be led by Russia, postulated a breach with practically all the governments of Europe. It meant in effect that Russia declared war, morally at least, on the rest of Europe and went into diplomatic and political isolation. It was a somewhat similar situation to that in which she found herself at the end of the reign of Nicolas I, when the ideas of the Slavophiles and the designs of the Emperor in the East had led to the fall of Sebastopol and moral isolation from Europe. But now the isolation was more complete and more lasting, because Russia challenged Europe, not on an issue of protecting Slavs in the Balkans, but on the very foundations on which nineteenth century

<sup>1</sup> See Map 4 (*at end*).

middle-class society had been built. Only one thing was in Russia's favour. Europe was locked in a deadly struggle at that time between the Allies and the Central Powers, and this gave the new Russia the opportunity to play off one alliance against the other. The Central Powers were ready for a deal, being at that moment heavily engaged in great offensive military operations in the West. Hence the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was signed in February 1918 by which Russia came out of the war. But if Russia and Germany were now formally at peace, in effect the German military machine had every intention of using the peace to continue its plans of conquest in the East. The Ukraine was invaded and puppet governments set up in the Cossack territories and the Caucasus, aiming at isolating Moscow in the North and undermining by encirclement the Soviet régime. The Soviets replied by guerilla warfare, that trusted weapon of the Russians throughout their history against all invaders of their land. German-occupied territories were infested with Red fighting units, while ceaseless propaganda was carried on among the German troops. More openly hostile were the Allied Powers, who sent definite military expeditions to march on Moscow from the North and East, overthrow the Soviets and establish a régime which would be more amenable to their influence. In this tragic hour when the whole world was in one way or another in arms against the new Russia, the Russian working people in town and village rallied round Lenin and Trotsky. The French and British invaders were driven off and the German war machine, smashed in France, retired from Russia and the Soviets spread their rule over all the former territories of the Tsar, except Poland, Finland and the Baltic provinces.

In the heat of this struggle an event happened which at the time passed almost unnoticed. The last Romanoff Tsar, Nicolas II, and his entire family were brutally done to death in a cellar in a West Siberian town. It was a terrible deed, and only to be explained by the panic which seized the Soviets

when a White Army reached Ekaterinburg in West Siberia and was about to occupy the place where they might liberate the Tsar. The immediate responsibility rested with the local Soviet but there can be little doubt that it would have happened in any case sooner or later, unless the Imperial family escaped from Russia. The pent-up animosities of generations in the minds of people like the Russians, who are by nature explosive, were such as to make a tragedy almost inevitable. It was a singularly unromantic martyrdom, unlike that of Charles I or Louis XVI. But to do a Tsar to death in an outburst of mob passion was something rather typically Russian and reminded one of similar incidents in Russian history, especially during the "Time of Troubles" and the chaotic period which followed the death of Peter the Great.

Meanwhile the Soviet Government had in the heat of the war of intervention founded the Communist International for the purpose of spreading revolts throughout Europe. This body owed its existence largely to the attack on Russia from the outside, for it was in effect the instrument forged by new Russia to defend herself and attack her enemies by spreading disruption within them. But as soon as the Great War ended Lenin saw his chance of getting what he called a "breathing-space" for Russia. He knew he had a titanic struggle before him. With a country whose economy was in ruin and chaos he had to hold off the interventionist armies of the Allies while he reorganised Russia's industries. He then conceived the great plan of shifting the centre of gravity of Russia's heavy industries from the south-west of Russia to the Urals, where it would be more out of the reach of foreign invaders in future. Thus strengthened he hoped to be able to keep Russia out of the conflicts of the rest of Europe. He realised that Russia in the course of her reconstruction would have many years in which she could not play a big role in the councils of Europe. The World Revolution proclaimed from Moscow would unite all Europe against Russia, but Lenin hoped that the national animosities between

the European Powers would work to his advantage and might even enable Communism to spread throughout Europe. And indeed there seemed some chance of this happening in the summer of 1920, when Poland attacked Soviet Russia and when, after some initial success, the Polish Army was driven back to the gates of Warsaw. But the Poles rallied and the Red Army retreated to the frontiers of Russia again, and with the Peace of Riga the revolutionary wave in Europe receded. But though Communism made no headway outside Russia, Europe was too disunited to take successful common action against the Soviets. Also the Liberal and Labour movements in Western Europe resisted the intervention of their Governments in Russia. So the stage was set for a new phase. It was time for Russia to return once more to the councils of the European nations. The process was slow. First the Communist International was made to soft-pedal. Trade Missions were exchanged with Great Britain and finally ambassadors. The U.S.S.R., as Russia now called herself, adopted a dualist policy of correct diplomatic relations with the rest of Europe while it kept in existence, though in the background the instrument for organising World Revolution. This was the lever which Russia thought to use to frighten French, German and British statesmen and make them treat her with respect. Gradually the idea of World Revolution faded and the Communist International was only there as a bogey to exert diplomatic pressure, just as the Tsar's Government in the eighties used to make a military demonstration on the Afghan frontier to secure consideration by the Powers of Russia's claims on the Bosphorus.

Finally, Russia in 1934 entered the League of Nations and her period of isolation ended. For sixteen years Russia had been cut off from normal intercourse with the rest of Europe, as in the Time of the Tartar domination and the "Time of Troubles" or when the Eastern school of foreign policy caused her to turn away from Europe and concern herself only with Asia and the colonisation of her Eastern frontiers. The

Messianic phase of proclaiming a world crusade for social revolution was an attempt to translate into political form the Russian passion for the liberation of mankind. In no country but Russia is there such an urge for universal, all-embracing world liberation. It is not peculiar to the Bolsheviks but has manifested itself periodically in Russian history, art and literature. It is found in the symphonies of Tchaikowsky, in the yearnings of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, in Tolstoy's realism and in Dostoewsky's ruthless analysis of the abnormalities of human nature. It is best described perhaps as the longing after something unattainable and which is known to be unattainable and is well expressed by the Russian word "Toska." It has its roots perhaps in the immense open spaces of Russia, expressed by another Russian word, "Prostor." This seems to cultivate a passion to embrace all humanity by the discovery of some great and perfect truth. As Gogol once said: "Is it not in limitless space that limitless thought is born." And was it not the limitless space of the Arabian desert that inspired Mahomet with thoughts to embrace all mankind in a great liberating religion?

Russia, as some of the Slavophil writers, like Lamansky in his day felt, has in the past played an important role in reconciling the outlook of Western Europe and Asia. Before the modern revolutionary and nationalist movements in China and India the people of those great Asiatic countries tended to deny the material world of to-day and look to the after-life and to the absorption of the individual into a mystic World Spirit. Something of this old idea will probably survive in Asia whatever the result of the modern movements, for it has its roots deeply embedded in the past. Western Europe on the other hand has developed the cult of the present and of material prosperity, while in religion it tends to a more rationalist explanation of the divine mysteries. There can be little doubt that Russian thought and action has in the past contained elements of both these two worlds. The most perfect example of this is Leo Tolstoy. His doctrine

of non-resistance to evil and his renunciation of worldly goods indicate Asiatic quietism; his hatred of oppression, and his burning desire to improve the lot of humanity are, however, in the direct line of thought of West European Christianity. And Tolstoy is no exception. In the final analysis Peter the Great in statecraft and Pushkin in literature aimed to reconcile East and West. While at first sight this does not seem to apply to the Bolsheviks, I believe that here, too, the tendency will be in the same direction in the course of time. They will try to apply the revolutionary doctrines of Western Europe in the surroundings which they find in Eastern Europe and Western Asia. They have taken the materialist ideology of a German Jew and made it the creed of a world crusade, led by Russia, to liberate mankind and set the human spirit free. The Bolshevik philosophy, however, is still in process of development. Some changes can already be noted. The national heroes of Russia, formerly ignored, are now venerated, indicating that the purely materialist outlook of the early revolutionaries is being slowly permeated by the native Russian spirit. Thus the evolution of modern Russian thought will doubtless go further and Russia may once more take up her role as the interpreter of the East to the West and of the West to the East.



*The Second Agrarian Revolution*

IF, in October 1917, Russia underwent a political revolution in which power passed into the hands of those who spoke for the industrial workers and peasants, the economic change following on this transfer of power was not completed till over a decade later. Indeed, it is true to say that as far as Russian agriculture was concerned, the revolution did not take place till 1930 and the process lasted several years after that. In fact this second revolution, though far less spectacular, was in many respects more important and far reaching than what went before. Of course, without the first Russia would have been faced with disaster. For the Bolsheviks had the task of pulling Russia out of a state of economic collapse. The industrial machine had completely run down, transport had almost ceased and raw materials for the factories were either non-existent or incapable of movement to the place of use. The peasant, after taking the landlord's latifundia and satisfying his age-long land-hunger, retired into small self-sufficient husbandry. Famine stalked the towns worse than ever, and even in the villages, too, drought afflicted certain districts where the primitive agriculture of the peasants was unable to cope with an adverse season. Indeed, conditions were worse, for there was no Zemstvo now, and the Soviet Commissars had no time to organise relief. Russia seemed to be sinking into another "Time of Troubles" with the Cossack Generals Kaledin, Krasnov and Dutov along with the Germans invading the Ukraine and British, French and Japanese forces invading the North and East, just as the Poles and Cossacks had done in those far off days. But, as in 1612 Prince Pozharsky with the citizens of Nijni Novgorod rallied the country and rid Russia of the invaders and set up a new dynasty, so now between 1917 and 1921 the in-

dustrial workers of Petrograd, as it was still called, Moscow and the towns of the Upper Volga rallied round Lenin and Trotsky, defeated the foreign interventionists, overthrew the Cossack leaders and at least cleared the way for the economic changes of the Second Revolution, which alone could build a new Russia.

The foreign military intervention and the consequent civil war had imposed a crude type of War Communism on the country. Everything was requisitioned by the state, and bands of Red Guards roamed the countryside, seizing the peasants' grain reserves, carrying it off for the troops at the front and leaving worthless paper money behind. Industry was meanwhile unable to supply the peasants' most elementary wants. But with the defeat of the White Armies and the withdrawal of the Allied forces from Russia, War Communism was recognised to be too oppressive. Peasant revolts and the Kronstadt mutiny shook the new régime, and Lenin in 1920 inaugurated the New Economic Policy. Private trade was allowed in all the products of agriculture after taxes had been paid to the Government. This undoubtedly averted immediate starvation but was useless as a long-term policy, since the private enterprise of small peasant economy could not increase agricultural production to the point required by the authorities to expand industry and modernise it. Russian agriculture had just emerged from semi-feudalism, where no peasant had any incentive to improve his land. The long-strip system of land utilisation practised by the village communes over a large part of Russia was useless as a method of promoting a large-scale increase of food production. A modernised agriculture based on tractor cultivation and an extension of the area cultivated was essential to support the intended drive to extend mining, smelting, engineering and constructional works of all kinds. With heavy and the lighter industries thus working, it would be possible after a few years to satisfy fully the peasants with industrial goods and so raise their general standard of life. But a goods famine

in the villages was inevitable while the plan was being got under way. The village must supply food on credit or the towns would starve and the new industries could not come into existence. But the peasant would not see this or rise to the occasion. For generations he had been living under feudal conditions of land tenure and by methods of communal land utilisation. The disappearance of the last traces of feudalism had left the idea of communal land utilisation untouched, except in those areas of the West where peasant proprietorship had actually begun after the Stolypin reforms. Moreover the peasant clung tenaciously to the individual homestead and, although he would redistribute the land every few years, he would not share the product of the land with his fellow villagers, and stuck to his individual farming. This was particularly so in the North and Centre where small livestock industry had always been carried on and the peasant feared having to share his cattle or submit to commissars interfering with his method of husbandry. Even in the corn districts of the South and East the individual peasant was wedded to his own method of corn growing, even though he felt the need every now and then to keep the village a community and prevent too great a sense of proprietorship developing in the land. But here in the corn-growing districts particularly there was developing a class of rich peasant who, more successful than his neighbour, had acquired more horses and cattle and now had begun to lend money and horse power to his weaker colleagues. This was also true of the Ukraine and the Western provinces where peasant proprietorship had been growing. Here class divisions had begun to appear in the villages and the kulak, or successful farmer, who was either a better cultivator or more fortunate than his neighbour, began to appear. The normal social make-up of the Russian village and the peasant mentality generally during the time between the two revolutions was such that there was no appreciation of the need for this large food credit which was required for the towns to enable industry

to restart and expand. Some still thought in terms of the primitive commune, others in terms of individual ownership and successful private farming enterprises. Neither were prepared to produce the increased food on credit or stint themselves, in order to raise the general standard of agriculture. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened in Russia if a system of private land-holding had developed along with co-operative societies of the Danish type. But this would have required a considerable period of education, and Russia could not wait. Moreover, the new rulers of Russia had ready-made Marxist ideas on state farming.

So the Bolshevik Government was faced with the most serious crisis of its career, and in 1929 Stalin and his colleagues decided that the peasants must be coerced into a new form of collective agriculture. They had no alternative if they were to secure the food to enable the industries of Russia to expand. Time was pressing. At any moment now Germany might become aggressive again, and with Russian industry not yet restored and with the greater part of it liable to military occupation through Poland and the Ukraine, the Red Army's resistance to invasion could not be maintained. So it became clear that without this second agrarian revolution the new Russia could not possibly have been consolidated or the threatening international situation met. Moreover, the new revolution assumed a form closely in line with the historical development of Russia. For the new form of collective farming was really an extension under twentieth century conditions of the age-long Russian system of collective land-utilisation through village communes. This new stage was made possible by the coming of the tractor and by the need to cultivate in large areas, imposing on the peasant the obligation to accept the ploughing and seeding of the grain and fodder crops as a collective undertaking, and the creation of large stud herds as an enterprise in common.

This of course was bound to involve the supercession of

the antiquated strip-field method of cultivation. On the other hand the peasant was to be allowed to have a holding of his own where he could have stock on a small scale under his direct personal control. Each peasant had to put in so many hours a week on the collective farm and was paid partly in cash and partly in kind. A stern struggle now commenced and continued during the years from 1930 to 1933. Those peasants—a powerful minority—whose private property instincts were strongly developed resisted bitterly. The section of the village in whom the old idea of the “mir” still lived was more amenable to the change, especially if small private stockkeeping, poultry rearing and market gardening were permitted in hours after collective farm work. Fortunately the long training of the Russian peasant in communal land utilisation made a large section of the villages take to this new collectivisation without great difficulty. Of course zealous commissars and academic Marxists from the Communist centres made things difficult by trying to “nationalise the chickens” and force collectivisation on every branch of agriculture. Stalin himself had to intervene to stop some of his headstrong followers. As it was, disorders and bloodshed were caused in some districts and serious acts of sabotage, resulting in widespread famines in the years 1931–32. In the Ukraine particularly where peasant proprietorship had taken considerable root a grave situation developed. But this was not the first time this had happened in Russian history before. Ivan the Terrible’s purges of the boyars and Peter the Great’s modernisation from above had been forced on a hostile and apathetic people. Finally, the reforms had been accepted and the people had formed their occupational councils to carry out the Tsar’s wishes. So to-day the Russian peasant, to carry out what Stalin and his colleagues decided was best for them, converted his old village commune into a modern collective farm with tractors. In the process those who did not agree were dealt with by the “Ogpu” just as those who resisted Ivan the Terrible were dealt with by the “Oprichniki.” For

individual human life and rights of minorities are less precious in Russia than with the Anglo-Saxon peoples when public interest is at stake. Russians concern themselves more with people in the mass than with individuals who make it up.

The net result of all this was that the second agrarian revolution went through and the food was produced; not as much as was expected, for the resistance of the kulaks and the property-minded was serious. Even in 1939 the total corn production of Russia was not more than it had been under the best years of the New Economic Policy, while the yield per acre remained considerably behind that of Western Europe, but the numbers of livestock had begun to rise and the products of the small holdings became increasingly important. Indeed the Soviet authorities had to be constantly watching to see that there was no backsliding, for the peasants in some areas were inclined to neglect the work on the collective grain farm for dairy, pig and poultry production on their small holdings. But this revolutionary change was more than justified, for the State had now more hold over the grain production on these collective farms than it could ever have had, if it had tried to collect its grain contributions from the old village communes. Consequently the towns were now more regularly supplied with bread and the industries in the new industrial areas were able to make a start. During the thirties a great upswing of industrial production took place and all this was only possible through the second agrarian revolution.

Difficulties of course developed in the problem of creating a civil service and a managerial staff for the new industrial developments. The Soviet Government had to violate its original principles by setting up a new form of class privilege for those directing industry or administering the machinery of the state. The same old problem of a rigid bureaucratic caste that plagued the Tsars began to plague Stalin. But the leaders of new Russia kept their eyes on the goal, the modernisation of Russian industry and agriculture and the

building up of a powerful military force to defend the Republic against the new menace of Nazi Germany. Had Stalin feared to tackle the kulaks as he did, had he shrunk from creating privileges for an indispensable civil service and managerial staff, it is not unlikely that Hitler's armies would have reached the Urals by the late summer of 1941.

*The U.S.S.R. and the Second World War*

So the second revolution went through with the usual accompaniment of suffering, and Russia became a country with a modern industry and agriculture. Nor can it be denied that economically the average worker in factory and collective farm acquired, as a result of this, a large share in the control of the organs of production whereby he obtained his livelihood. The works and farm councils out of which the authority of the Government sprang, through chains of larger councils or Soviets, flourished now even more than they did in the earlier periods of Russian history. They became the training ground in public life for the millions of the new Russia. They gave the Russian workers and peasants the opportunity to take a direct part in advising and, if need be, criticising the management, while a watchful state bureaucracy saw to it that workers' control did not develop into syndicalism and that the interests of the whole community were paramount.

On the other hand it is impossible to say that there is the same political freedom in Russia to-day that there is in the Anglo-Saxon democracies. Only the Communist Party is permitted to exist and the press is entirely a Government-controlled one. The position in this respect is far less free than it was during the last part of the reign of Nicolas II, when parties wholly opposed to the established order existed and were fitfully allowed to publish newspapers and periodicals. Indeed, the conditions under Stalin in regard to the absence of legal opposition is similar to conditions prevailing under Nicolas I and Alexander III, although of course under the present totalitarian régime power is exercised in the interests of the workers and peasants, whereas under the Romanoffs it was in the interests of the landed nobility,



bureaucracy and industrial capital. The Bolsheviks claim that the elimination of a landlord and capitalist class has rendered redundant political parties, whose *raison d'être* is the existence of economic conflicts, now done away with. Once dictatorship has got rid of large private ownership in land and capital, has laid the basis of the Soviet constitution and has declared any challenge to this to be treason, then automatically the old parties become unnecessary. Granted the absence of a spirit of compromise, then a gradual passage over from one system to another through a parliamentary democracy cannot take place. But there never has been an occasion in Russian history where gradual change by agreement has taken place. It was not so in the days of Ivan the Terrible, nor in the time of Peter the Great. An attempt was made in the period of the Duma at the end of Nicolas II's reign, but for reasons dealt with above it failed.

At the same time discussion on public issues took place at first within the framework of the Soviet constitution, and the earlier Soviet Congresses even contained small groups forming a Menshevik<sup>1</sup> opposition and including the party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, spiritual descendants of the Narodniks. The civil war and foreign intervention, however, sharpened the conflict, and the Soviets dispensed with opposition. The Communist Party became the sole party in the Soviets, the bauble of opposition was removed and the Soviet Congress became the Rump Parliament. The Party, in fact, became the sole arena where criticism could and did take place, and much constructive work was done in this way, especially on matters of detail in the organisation of collective farms, industrial programmes and so forth. But when it came to wider and more fundamental political issues, then trouble arose. And such issues soon developed on which Communists of various shades of opinion differed. For instance, Trotsky had from the earliest times led a group that had opposed Lenin's policy of compromise with the peasants,

<sup>1</sup> See page 101,

and of a conciliatory attitude towards the capitalist Powers of Europe, at any rate at this stage. He advanced the theory of the "permanent revolution," and argued that the Russian Soviet State could not exist side by side with capitalist states. He therefore advocated the continuous sharpening of the struggle for world revolution. Lenin, on the other hand, realised that Western and Central Europe were not after all heading for revolution in the Russian style, and was ready to come to an understanding with their governments.

After Lenin's death the conflict between these two points of view within the ranks of the Russian Communist Party became acute, Stalin leading one section and Trotsky the other. Plotting and counter-plotting lead to coercive measures and repression. A little time before this the German Spartakist leader, Rosa Luxemburg, a friend of Lenin during her lifetime, had warned him of the danger of restricting free discussion within the party. Yet such was the conspiratorial habit which had been inculcated among Russians for centuries that a serious disagreement on such an issue as the "permanent revolution" would not be solved in a spirit of accommodation, even among colleagues of the same revolutionary party, but one side could start to plot against the other with the result of inevitable reprisals. So Stalin, a man of great organising ability and immense industry and a devoted adherent of Lenin's policy of peace and realism in relation to the rest of Europe, as the best means of preserving the fruits of the Revolution, now found himself challenged by Trotsky, also a man of great energy and oratorical power, but immensely vain and convinced that he was indispensable to the new Russia. Undoubtedly the Revolution owed much to him, for in its darkest hour he had organised the Red Army, while his oratory has sustained and inspired millions at moments of the greatest peril. He had been in fact the Danton of the Russian Revolution. But he forgot when these days passed that no individual in this world is indispensable, least of all in Russia. As long as Lenin

lived all went well, but soon after his death the storm broke. Then followed the exiling of Trotsky and the trial and execution of the Trotskyists. The world was much puzzled at these trials. The abject recantations and self-condemnation of the accused seemed to indicate a complete absence of self-respect, which no accused in Western Europe with any sense of dignity, however hopeless his case, would ever show in court. The explanation is probably to be found in certain quite definite Russian characteristics. One could see it peeping through in Bukharin's remarkable last speech at his trial. First of all the Russian revolutionaries lived a life completely bound up with their party or sect. They knew no other life. If suddenly they were uprooted from the only surrounding they ever knew, they became completely unbalanced and their whole mental equilibrium was upset. But even deeper than this there was something which applied not to revolutionaries only, but to Russian life as a whole. The Russian is deeply religious, not necessarily in a Christian sense at all, but just religious in that he believes in some creed for the salvation of mankind. It may be Christianity, but it may just as easily be Marxism. It may be spiritual, but it may also be materialist. If he believed all his life that the Bolshevik Party would save Russia and Mankind by the World Revolution, and if he had accepted the authority of the party as part of his life, when suddenly that authority turns on him, he becomes overwhelmed by a sense of sin and starts to accuse himself of backsliding. Such an attitude of mind is difficult for anyone to understand in the Anglo-Saxon world, where cultivation of individual character is such a strong part of education. But in a country like Russia where the whole community is regarded as a religious congregation, either in a Christian sense, as it was throughout the Middle Ages, or in the Messianic sense as it was later, when the Slavophiles and still later the Bolsheviks founded their new Church, then to be excommunicated from this Church was something worse than death. For this reason the boyar victims of Ivan the

Terrible cursed themselves and blessed the Tsar while undergoing torture. So the Trotskyists blessed Stalin and cursed Trotsky before going to the firing squad after sentence by the revolutionary tribunal. During the years 1935-37 thousands of persons throughout the length and breadth of Soviet Russia in the Great Purge were either shot or exiled to Siberia, till the foundations of the state rocked. But when it was all over, there was a feeling of relief that schism had been suppressed, that the schismatics had seen the errors of their ways and, like the heretics burnt at the stake in England in the Middle Ages, had expiated their sins. It is clear then that nothing unusual happened in the Great Purge. It had happened before in Russian history. It happened in other parts of Europe outside Russia during the Middle Ages. But it was particularly marked in Russia because the Russians periodically have phases in which they regard themselves as inspired with a mission to save mankind, and while in this state of mind spiritual totalitarianism is the supreme law.

Looking at Russian history from a legal and constitutional point of view it may be noted that Russian tradition has always from the earliest times favoured the executive power in the state rather than the legislature. The legacy of the Tartar invasions gave a bias to the influence of executive authority in the state. Legislatures were never admitted to anything other than advisory functions except towards the end of Nicolas II's reign. But, as I have shown above, the period when the Duma had a limited right of legislation did not last long. When, after the October Revolution, legislative power came into the hands of Soviet Congresses of workers and peasants, the executive soon began to exercise the dominant influence in the state through the Political Bureau of the Communist Party and the Secret Police. It had been so in the Tsar's time for centuries past, and it was so again. The fine balance between legislature, executive and judiciary, such as exists in the British Commonwealth and the United

States of America has never existed in Russia, and was not created by the October Revolution of 1917. The new Soviet Constitution published first in 1937 gave indications that an attempt will be made in the future to establish some such relationship. But this has yet to come. The new constitution exists on paper only. Meanwhile, it is true to say that, though there may be no *Habeas Corpus* Act in Russia, there is greater economic freedom and opportunity for workers and peasants than exists in any Anglo-Saxon country, and this has come as a result of the October Revolution.

So the new Russia with its constitution based on factory and collective farm councils had carried through the second economic revolution in the early thirties, and had purged by 1938 the political apparatus of the state of unpractical academic revolutionaries who put World Revolution before the interests of the Russian. Economically, the Revolution had gone forward, and socialist planning in industry and agriculture had made it possible greatly to increase public development schemes, like the Dnieprostroy, the Turk-Sib Railway, the White Sea Canal and the opening of the Kuznetsk Basin, and also to modernise the military forces of the Union, while the war potential was shifted in part at least to regions further East and out of the reach of Germany. Politically, Russia had given up her role of a World Missionary, as she had once before given up crusading for the Balkan Slavs, and had settled down so to strengthen herself at home that she would become an example to the world in social and economic planning. The work which Lenin and Stalin performed during the years 1918 to 1940 was so far like that of Peter the Great in that it imitated Western Europe in the introduction of modern science and technical processes, but it was more thorough than Peter's work, and there was added to it also Russia's own contribution in the form of popular representation based on industrial and peasant councils. Previous social changes, as in the reforms of Alexander II, had been half-hearted through obstruction

by vested interests, but the two revolutions of 1917 and 1930-31 were so thorough that first the old landed nobility and then the village usurer and dealer were eliminated altogether, though by methods which would be regarded by the Anglo-Saxon world as unduly threatening to civil liberties. So when the European War started in September 1939, the U.S.S.R. had gone a long way towards the goal of re-establishing herself as a first-class industrial and military power in Europe. But Stalin had no intention of entangling Russia in a Western alliance against Germany unless he was quite sure, firstly, that Britain would treat Russia as an equal, and secondly, that war with Germany was inevitable. He was not sure of either and he therefore decided to keep on quietly building up Russia's strength. That is probably the explanation of the Russo-German Treaty of 1939. It was not unlike the Treaty of Tilsit between Alexander I and Napoleon, and was equally shortlived when the upstart dictator decided that the time had come to break the power of the new Russia.

Before this happened, however, Stalin made every possible preparation to meet Germany's coming aggression. It was vital to Russia to hold important strategic points on her Western frontiers to cushion any attack that might be coming on her big industrial centres from the West. This applied especially to Leningrad where a hostile Finland under German influence could strike at the heart of this great city, the soul of the October Revolution. As far back as the Napoleonic wars the Emperor Alexander I had successfully acquired naval bases on the Finnish seaboard, as part of an agreement under which Finland was incorporated into the Empire and granted full autonomy and a constitution. Thus, for over a hundred years Russia had felt reasonably secure with the Baltic fleet based on Kronstadt and Helsingfors, while garrisons were kept at Viborg, Hangö and Abo to guard the entrance to the Gulf of Finland.

Then in the March Revolution of 1917 all this disappeared. Finland declared her independence and the Kerensky Govern-

ment was too weak to resist. After the October Revolution, however, the Bolsheviks attempted to restore the position for Russia by other methods. They raised a Red Revolt in Finland as part of their plan for World Revolution. But the squib was damp and did not go off. The silent and morose Protestant peasant-proprietors of the Finnish backwoods had as little use for Red as for Tsarist Imperialism. It was necessary, therefore, for Stalin to try to get these strategic points and naval bases by negotiations, and he wisely aimed solely at this and not at converting the Finns forcibly to Bolshevism. Unfortunately the Finns had long memories, for they had not forgotten the past. The deadlock was complete. Britain, who had influence with the Finns, might have acted as an honest broker, but had at that time a Prime Minister whom the Russians did not trust. The many years of Anglo-Russian misunderstanding made British mediation, therefore, impossible. So the tragic Russo-Finnish war of the winter of 1939-40 took place and Russia got what she wanted. To do Russia justice it must be said that she took nothing more than she had originally asked for, stood by the peace treaty, and never made any attempt to interfere with the internal affairs of Finland.

The same thing cannot, however, be said of the Baltic States, where in the course of the summer of 1940 Russia carried out a military occupation of Estonia and Latvia, and set up a Soviet régime there. Whatever one may think of this, however, it must be admitted that these little countries were far too small for independent economic existence, and would have been wise in any case to throw in their lot with their great Eastern neighbour, for the only other alternative was Nazi Germany.

Thus the north-western flank of the U.S.S.R. was made ready for the inevitable clash between Slav and Teuton, the first round of which had been fought out on the ice of Lake Peipus in 1242.<sup>1</sup> This time it was also a conflict of two

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 22, 23.

ideologies, racial domination and social regeneration. Hitler decided that he must attack Russia some time in the spring of 1941. His failure to break Britain by air raids in the autumn and winter of 1940 faced him with the danger of ultimate defeat by the British blockade. If he could harness the natural resources of Russia to his war machine, he could at least secure a breaking of the British blockade and a stalemate. For years the Bavarian General Haushofer had been running the theory of the so-called Eur-Asian "heartland," whereby the resources of Europe and Northern and Central Asia would be mobilised under German leadership to become an economic unit completely independent of the maritime powers of Western Europe. To secure this end is probably the reason for the carefully planned onslaught by Hitler on Russia on June 22, 1941. The whole Nazi foreign policy had originally been built up on the idea of large scale colonisation by Germans of Western Russia and the Ukraine and the pushing back of the Eastern Slavs to the Urals, their dispossession and expulsion from their native lands. The Haushofer plan fitted well into this and became part of the German war aims in the East. It is a typical example of the German military-academic-pseudo-scientific racial theory in action, which has plagued Europe for the first half of this century. It can even be seen to have run through German foreign policy since the time of Bismarck, who inaugurated its early stages by the persecution of the Poles of Prussia. A generation later the whole terrible war machine of the Reich was mobilised in 1939 to carry out this inhuman enslavement of Europe and Asia for the gangsters of Berlin and their *Herrenvolk*. Against this, in the East stood the Red Army in the summer of 1941, with the Russian people behind it, true to their ancient tradition, inherited centuries ago from the Byzantine Empire of racial toleration. To this was added the native spirit of Russia with its broad sympathy and desire for the salvation of all humanity, though as the great Russian poets and musicians from time to time have shown us, they

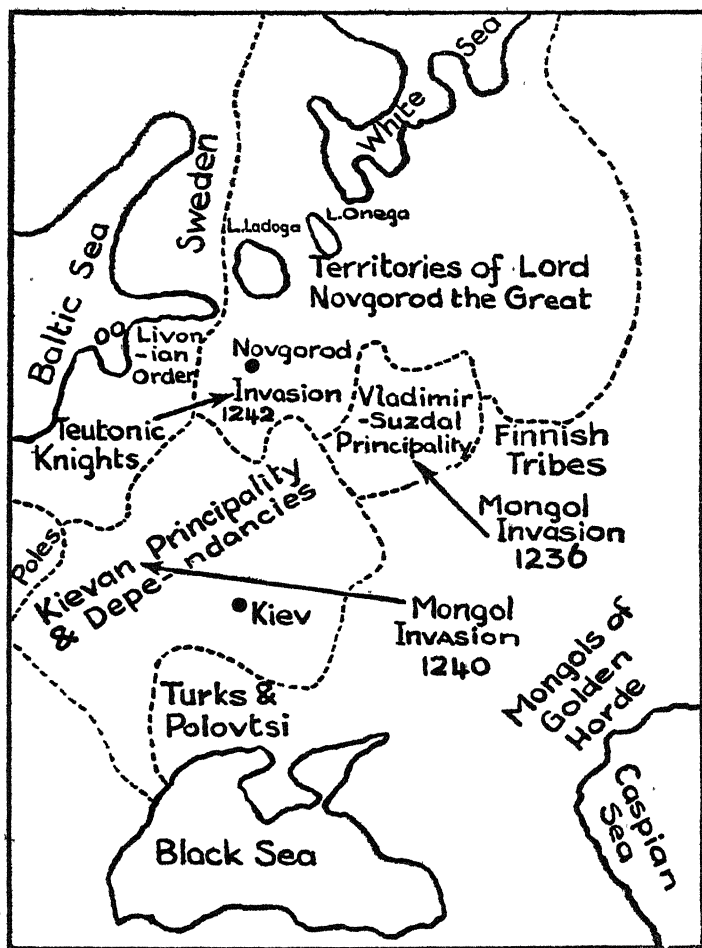


seem to doubt its complete attainment. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that Russia's war aim will be built on the historical and traditional foundations of her foreign policy. This is indicated by the passage in Stalin's Order of the Day on the 24th anniversary of the Red Army in February 1942, when he said: "The strength of the Red Army lies in the fact that it does not and cannot entertain racial hatred of other peoples, even including the German people." And this, too, was written in spite of the atrocities committed by the German armies in Russia in 1941-42. It is clear, then, that the Russia of to-day, like the Russia of old, refuses to regard the Germans as incurable criminals, but rather as a nation with arrested development, needing correction, control and re-education. The broad spirit of Russian humanity speaks out in that Order of the Day of Stalin, himself a Georgian and a living example of Russian brotherhood with the peoples of the East. There was the same spirit in the proclamations of Alexander I during the Napoleonic wars and of Alexander II on the emancipation of the serfs, and to the Balkan Slavs during the Russo-Turkish War.

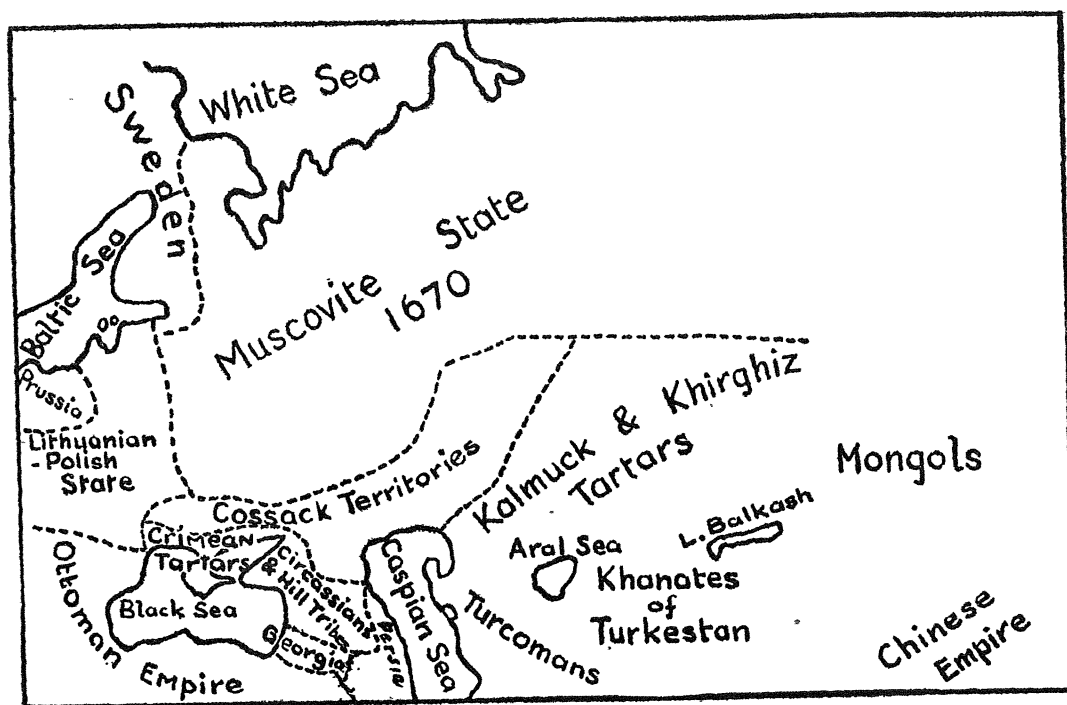
Another task also remains, and without its accomplishment the Russian spirit and outlook on life can never achieve its full recognition throughout the world. This must be understood and appreciated throughout the Anglo-Saxon countries, and Russia, too, must learn to appreciate the traditions and spirit of the Anglo-Saxon world. The Russian conceives the world as a vast brotherhood, and for him individuality and personality are of smaller account than with the Anglo-Saxon world. Did not the Tartar invasions teach him the hollowness of personal possessions and even the transitoriness of life itself? The Russians have spread over a continent and have permeated the people there with their ideas of brotherhood. They have explored great land surfaces of the earth and pioneered in the region of the spirit. The Anglo-Saxon is an explorer, too, in the world of the oceans. Brought up in his Protestant traditions he has learnt the value of self-

reliance and personality. He knows that genuine human co-operation can only come if the personality of each individual is fully developed. He wants to be sure of the bricks before he builds the house. His mistake often is that he is so keen on the bricks that he forgets to work out the plan of the house.

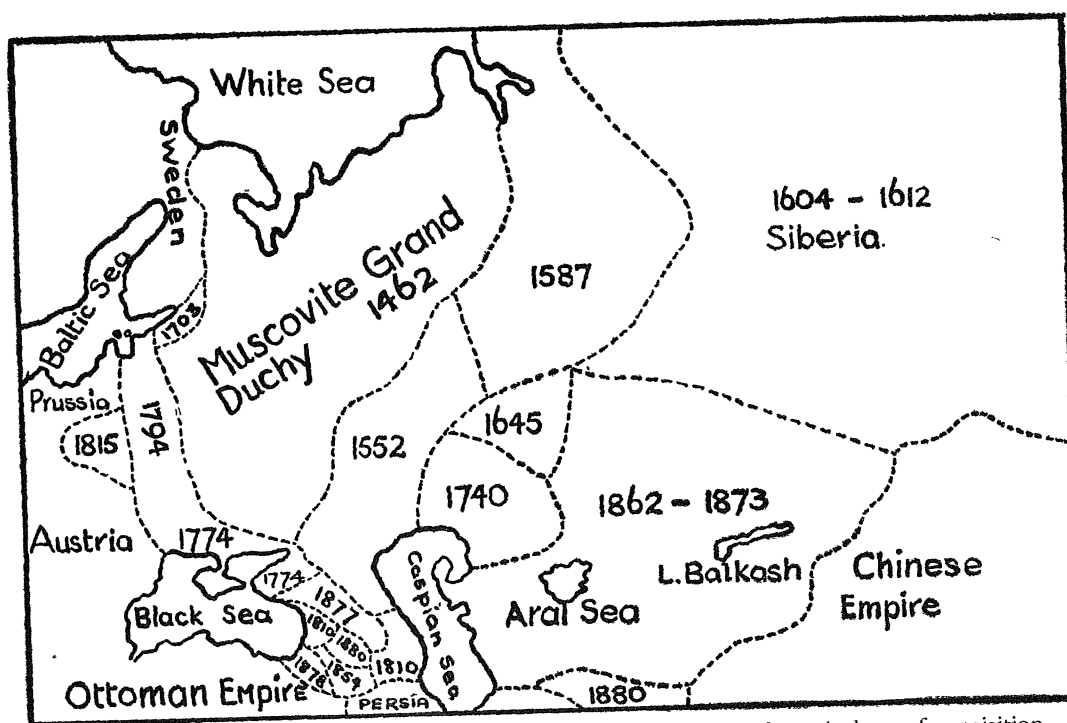
The Russian, on the other hand, thinks mainly of the plan of the house. The bricks for him tend to become a secondary matter. So the future of civilisation after the Second World War may well depend on how well the British-American and Russian peoples learn to appreciate each other's history and traditions, that thereby their ways of life, like the tributary rivulets of "Mother Volga," may converge into a mighty stream.



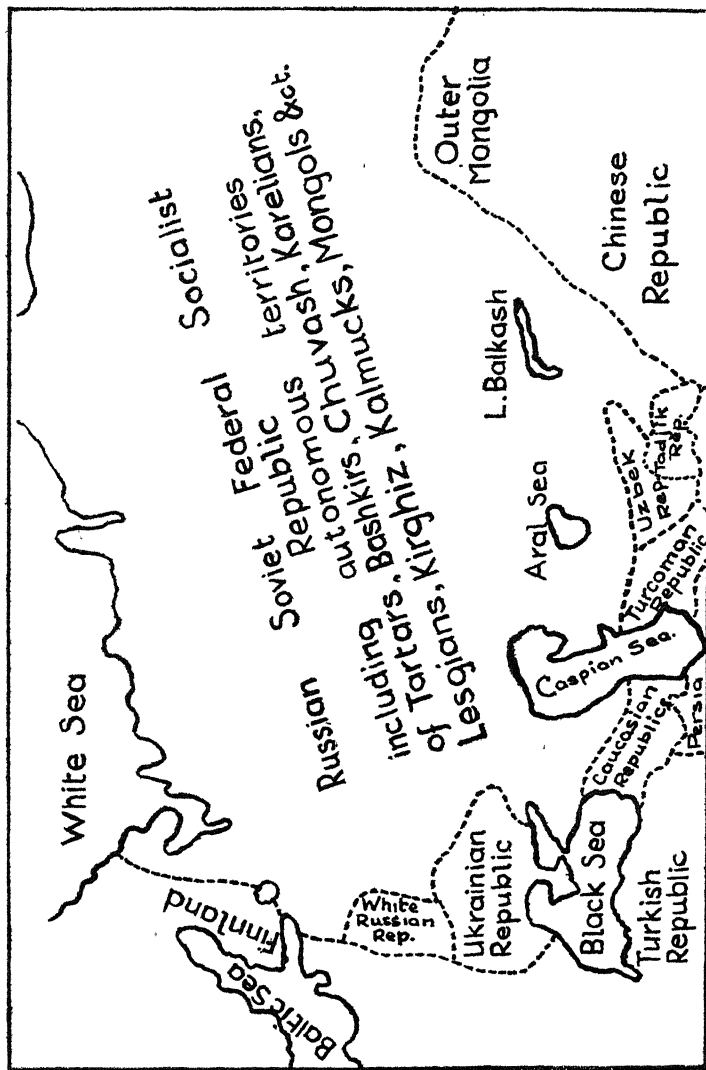
1. Political Centres of the Eastern Slavs—twelfth and thirteenth centuries, showing directions of foreign invasions.



2. Muscovite State at time of Tsar Alexis (1670).



3. Expansion of Muscovy from sixteenth century to end of Romanoffs, with dates of acquisition.



4. European and Central Asian autonomous territories and federal republics of the U.S.S.R.

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